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Christians, Zionism and Palestine

THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES

CHRISTIANS, ZIONISM AND PALESTINE

CHRISTIANS, ZIONISM AND PALESTINE

A SELECTION OF ARTICLES AND STATEMENTS ON THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

THE INSTITUTE FOR PALESTINE STUDIES

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FOREWORD

THIS VOLUME is a collection of articles and statements on both the biblical and political aspects of the Palestine problem. In part I, "Zionism and the Bible," six authorities in the Old and New Testaments discuss the Zionist claim—which is frequently supported by biblical fundamentalists in the West—that the modern State of Israel is a fulfilment of biblical promises and prophecies. Among the subjects considered are the true meaning of biblical promises concerning Palestine, the use of the phrase "the Israel of God" in the Bible, and the problems involved in attempting to establish a theological link between the Israel of old and the modern state. Four of the contributions are taken from the Institute's previous publication, *Palestine and the Bible*, while two—those by Dr. Thurston and Dr. Holladay—are lectures recently delivered in Beirut.

Part II of the volume, "Christians and the Palestine Problem Today," contains a selection of articles from involved Christians on the issues which, in their opinion, are raised by the conflict today. Of special interest are the articles by Father Corbon and Dr. Oxtoby, which examine the extent to which Western and Western Christian understanding of the conflict is hindered by preconceptions and concerns unrelated to the merits of the situation. Other articles consider the immediate issues and moral problems raised for Christians by the conflict, and the volume closes with the reprinting of some statements by official Church bodies on the Middle East situation.

Several of the articles in the following pages are reprinted by permission. The Institute for Palestine Studies is grateful to be able to reproduce these contributions on such an important subject. Acknowledgements in detail are given in footnotes at the beginning of the relevant chapter.

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PART I

ZIONISM AND THE BIBLE

1

ZIONISTS AND THE BIBLE

A criticism of the claim that the establishment of an independent Jewish state in Palestine is prophesied in Holy Scripture

PROFESSOR ALFRED GUILLAUME

I WISH TO make it plain at the outset that my remarks are directed to one aspect of Zionist claims—the claim to fulfill scripture by the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine—and must not be interpreted in any other way or be taken to prejudice the claim of the Jews to be allowed to make a home in Palestine.

To a superficial reader it well might seem that a divine promise to give a land to a particular people made some four thousand years ago and often repeated constituted that people owners of that land by divine right. Now if this is the Jewish title to Palestine it must be carefully scrutinised. Accordingly I propose to examine a few texts which are familiar to all practising Jews, and which have profoundly influenced some Christian bodies, particularly in America.

The points which are of importance are (1) to whom were the promises made? (2) What was the extent of the land which was promised? And (3) was the promise irrevocable or was it subject to any conditions?

(1) To Whom Were The Promises Made?

The first explicit promise of Palestine to the descendants of Abraham was at Shechem (now Nablus) in Genesis 12:7: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Ch. 13:15, when Abraham is standing

on a hill near Bethel, has the words: "all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it and to thy seed for ever." Ch. 15:18 is more explicit: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." The promises are repeated to Isaac; and to Jacob in 28:12; "the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed, and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." When Abraham made a covenant with God through circumcision (17:8), all the land of Canaan was promised to him as "an everlasting possession." Other passages might be quoted, but these are representative, and others add nothing that is relevant here.

Now it is generally supposed that these promises were made to the Jews, and to the Jews alone. But that is not what the Bible says. The word 'to thy seed' inevitably includes Arabs, both Muslims and Christians, who can claim descent from Abraham through his son Ishmael. (Here we are not concerned with the Muslim tradition that Abraham was once at Meccah and left Ishmael there). Ishmael was the reputed father of a large number of Arab tribes, and Genesis records that Abraham became the father of many North Arabian tribes through his concubine Keturah. It cannot be argued that the words of Gen. 21:10-12, necessarily cancel the promises made to Abraham's seed as a whole: "(Sarah) said to Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight on account of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken unto her voice: for in Isaac shall seed be called unto thee. And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." It is true that henceforth among the descendants of Isaac 'the seed of Abraham' was taken to mean the Israelites; but from the beginning it was not so, and the descendants of Ishmael had every right to call and consider themselves of the seed of Abraham.

Moreover, when the covenant of circumcision was made with Abraham (Gen. 17) and the land of Canaan was promised as "an everlasting possession," it was Ishmael who was circumcised; Isaac had not then been born.

From this brief study of the divine promise to the descendants

of Abraham we see that the first promise necessarily included all the descendants of Ishmael; but that afterwards in the time of Isaac and Jacob the promise was narrowed to their descendants, though not in such a way as to exclude explicitly their Arab brethren; and it is well known that many Arabs accompanied Moses and Joshua into Palestine when the country was partially occupied; and not a little of Moses' success was due to the kindness and hospitality of Jethro the Midianite, who was of course an Arab and Moses' father-in-law.

(2) Extent of The Promised Land

The second question as to what was the extent of 'The Promised Land' is a little difficult to determine. The passages quoted under (1) begin with a vague reference to "this land" from the starting point of Shechem (Nablus), and go on to include all the area from "the river of Egypt" to the Euphrates; the third passage speaks of Abraham's descendants spreading out in all four directions. Here, again, it is important to note that the promise of dominion from Nile to Euphrates was made before the birth of Ishmael and before the birth of Isaac, so that this territory was not to be necessarily and exclusively Israelite; *and save for the short period when Solomon's authority was recognised in this area (I Kings 4:21) it has always been in the possession of the Arabs.*

Looking again at Gen 13:15, it is clear that Transjordania was included in the promise to Abraham because it would be plainly visible from the hill at Bethel; but this promise again predates the birth of Ishmael and Isaac, and so cannot be held to constitute an exclusively Israelite claim to the territory on the other side of the Jordan.

However, in the Book of Deuteronomy Moses told the people that God had commanded them to go in and occupy the country from the Mediterranean in the west to the Euphrates in the east, and from the Negeb in the south to the Lebanon in the north. These instructions the Israelites did not, or could not, carry out. They could not occupy the coast land which the Philistines held, and they never possessed the ports or the hinterland of Phoenicia. Some centuries later, in the reign of David, they did gain possession of Damascus, and David entered into a treaty of friendship with Hiram, king of Tyre; so that when Solomon held a great service of dedication when the temple building was completed deputies came from as far north as the region of Hama and from the south as far as the modern El-

'Arish. But before Solomon's reign had ended much of David's empire had returned to its former possessors. Everyone is aware that the process of attrition went on until the kingdom of Judea was confined to a few hundred square miles of land around Jerusalem, and even this was lost to the Babylonians in 597 B.C.

(3) Was the Promise Irrevocable?

It will have been observed that two of the passages quoted under (1) use the words "for ever" and "everlasting" of what is to be a future Israelite occupation of Palestine. The same word stands for both the English renderings in the Hebrew original; and "everlasting" is not the proper meaning. The word ('olam) means 'a long time,' 'antiquity,' 'futurity,' and we read of "days of old," "waste places of old," "gates of old," "from of old," and similar expressions, all of which employ this word rendered above "for ever," or "everlasting." Again, a psalmist says: "I will sing for ever," an expression which the most literal interpreter of Holy Scripture can hardly suppose to be the literal meaning!

Thus, summing up the evidence so far adduced, one is forced to the conclusion that the land of Palestine was not originally promised to the Jews exclusively, and that the first promise was indefinite ('this land') and was subsequently enlarged to include Transjordan, Syria, the Lebanon, and the nomad's land as far as the Euphrates. Lastly we see that there never was an unconditional promise of an everlasting possession; though a long and indefinite period was intended.

We are now led to a stage of history and prophecy which bears more directly on current misunderstandings of Hebrew prediction. Had we no prophetic messages to guide us it would be apparent that these promises of possession of the land of Canaan were not unconditional; the covenant relation between Israel and God demanded loyalty from the people, and individual and corporate righteousness. Were the people to fail in these respects a terrible doom awaited them. The following words spoken by Moses in the 28th ch. of Deuteronomy apply in parts so easily to the sufferings of Jewry in the past few years that many have seen in them a prophecy of our own times: "It shall come to pass if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee and shall overtake thee... And the Lord shall scatter you among

the peoples, from the one end of the earth; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers, even wood and stone. And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart and failing of eyes, and pining of soul: and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee..."

Here it is clear that the divine promises to the patriarchs have been annulled by the national apostasy; and when the Assyrian captivity removed the population of Samaria, and the Babylonian captivity the people of Judah, the prophets saw in the disasters a vindication of the divine justice on a disobedient and gainsaying people.

But they taught their people that a remnant would return, and would restore the temple and the religious life of the community; and they looked forward to a time when the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. It is often forgotten that these men were inspired poets who mingled very practical matters like the Return from the Babylonian Exile with sublime pictures of the desert blossoming as the rose, the lion lying down with the lamb, men beating their swords into pruning hooks, and forsaking and forswearing war for ever. They also prophesied of the setting up of the kingdom of David.

Unhappily, the practical was fulfilled and the ideal remained an ideal. Owing to the fact that the things that religious men yearn for were not realised when the Jews returned to Palestine there has been a tendency in the past to interpret not only the eschatological passages in the prophets but also the practical and political prophecies, of some time in the future; and as all prophecies in the Old Testament necessarily and inevitably centre around the Jewish people and their relation to God, the Golden Age is inseparable from the Holy City inhabited by holy Israelites. It would seem to be the hope of some that if the Jews could be returned to Palestine and form a state the Golden Age would, in some mysterious way, appear on earth.

But such views are a distortion of the Old Testament prophecies which predicted a return from Babylon and from all the lands whither the Jews had been exiled. And these prophecies were fulfilled. The Jews did return to Judea, they did rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and they did rebuild the temple; and after fluctuating fortunes they did secure a brief period of political independence and expansion under the Maccabees. Thus the prophecies of the Return have been fulfilled, and they cannot be fulfilled again. Within the canonical literature of the Old Testament there is no prophecy of a second return

after the return from the Babylonian Exile; because (a) after the Exile all the Jews who wished to do so had returned to the Holy Land, though a great many more preferred to remain where they were and formed the Diaspora which afterwards became the backbone of the Christian Church; and (b) the last of the prophets died centuries before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

It would be possible to criticize the claim that Scripture prophesies Jewish supremacy in Palestine from the point of view of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament; but this has been intentionally ignored; and the Bible has been left to speak for itself.

Again, it would be possible to use the New Testament argument that the Church is now the Israel of God; but this seems inadvisable. This short study is in no sense a polemic; but a brief examination of what the Old Testament says on matters in which its authority has been evoked.

2

ISRAEL: FULFILLMENT OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY?

DR. ELMER BERGER

SINCE THE SEVENTH pre-Christian century, which was distinguished by the emergence of the great literary Prophets of the Old Testament, there have been two streams of thought or ideology in Judaism.

The one stream avowedly stressed the national and particularistic characteristics of Judaism. The other stressed the universal. Occasionally, a personality—or a group—attempted some even-balanced synthesis or fusion of the two, essentially opposing forces. But more often than not, from the days of Amos—the first of the great literary Prophets—Jews were divided sectarianly between the two interpretations of their faith.

In any effort to evaluate the Biblical bases—or lack of them—for the present State of Israel, recognition of these two interpretations of Judaism is essential.

For it cannot be denied that the school which emphasized the nationalistic and particularistic regarded an eventual return to Zion as theologically important. For the school which pursued the universalistic emphasis of Judaism, the "Return to Zion" was—in a physical, political sense—no consideration at all. To this group, therefore, whatever the Bible may say about the "Return to Zion" is no more binding than what the Bible—or any of the subsequent, interpretative, Rabbinic literature—has to say about the dietary laws, the minutiae of priestly conduct, or the laws pertaining to the sacrificial practices of the ancient Temple.

These Jews, following the universalistic leadership of the Prophets, are frankly and self-confessedly "protestants." They are no more bound, in their religious conduct, by any effort —however good or bad it may be—to understand the *literal* word of Scripture than the protestants of any other religion of man.

This was made clear, in 1885, in what is still the classic statement of this protestant or Reform Judaism (as it is known in the United States), in a document called the Pittsburgh Platform. A group of the most distinguished Reform Rabbis of the day, meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, declared:

"4. We hold that all such Mosaic and rabbinical laws as regulate diet, priestly purity, and dress originated in ages and under the influence of ideas entirely foreign to our present mental and spiritual state. They fail to impress the modern Jew with a spirit of priestly holiness; their observance in our days is apt rather to obstruct than to further modern spiritual elevation.

"5. We recognize in the modern era of universal culture of heart and intellect the approaching of the realization of Israel's great Messianic hope for the establishment of the kingdom of truth, justice and peace among all men. We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and therefore expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron, nor the restoration of any of the laws concerning the Jewish state."[1]

In any political context therefore—and the question of the relationship to the Bible of the political act of establishing the State of Israel is surely a political context—this group of Jews must be excluded from any who suggest any stake in Israel, predicated upon Biblical mandates. Those of this group who are Zionists or pro-Zionists, have been persuaded by considerations which have derived from pragmatic and expedient reasoning.

It *may* be true such protestant Jews are in a minority. There is almost no way to prove this. The obvious denominational divisions within Judaism—Reform, Conservative and Orthodox—are no *real* barometer of adherence to stringent interpretations of Old Testament texts. For example, it is generally conceded that the Conservative movement is overwhelmingly "Zionist." Since what Zionism means is, in itself, a subject of debate within the movement, it is by no means easy to be sure even of this.

[1] *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. 6, p. 241.

But whatever it means, and despite a considerable amount of "official" public support for Israel and Zionism, a bitter battle took place, at the 1959 biennial Convention of Conservative Judaism's most responsible body, over the question of whether, or not, the entire movement should move, *en masse,* into the World Zionist Organization. According to the *New York Times* for November 18, 1959, the United Synagogues of America argued "the wisdom of a religious group's joining with what many delegates considered a 'political' body...

"The issue arose at a session set aside for speeches on the role of the World Council of Synagogues...

"Dr. Abraham J. Heschel, Professor of Jewish Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, said he would be unhappy to see the Roman Catholic Church join the Democratic Party, or the National Council of Churches (Protestant and Eastern Orthodox) join the Republican or Democratic parties."

The convention of these Conservative Jews determined not to join the World Zionist Organization—at least for the present.

The action does not mean that many, if not most, of the representatives are not Zionists, or, at least, strongly committed to pro-Israelism. But it does mean that to a substantial number of these representatives of Conservative Judaism, "The Return to Zion" is something not to be entrusted to a political mechanism. And the political mechanism not only is not part of their Judaism, but they resist any fusion of the two. It is only a logical deduction therefore, that the State of Israel, brought into being by the World Zionist movement and still nurtured by it, is also not considered by these leaders of Conservative Judaism to be a part of their faith. It cannot be considered, by them, to be a fulfillment of the Old Testament.

This leaves, for consideration, only those who follow the traditions of Orthodoxy in Judaism. For this denomination—unlike Reform which rejected it—the Messianic hope includes "The Return to Zion." But to these same Orthodox traditionalists, the phrase has a variety of meanings and the realization of the Messianic dream is to come about through a highly complex process—*none of which has been fulfilled in the establishment of the State of Israel.*

For to the genuine Orthodox Jew the Messianic "Return to Zion" is an integral part—indeed the climax—of a spiritual process. It is the culmination of mankind's redemption; and it will take place when, in the judgment of God, the race or man has meticulously

fulfilled the perfectionist pre-requisite for the utopian "return."

This is why the Orthodox—and most Conservative—Jews *pray* for the "Return to Zion" and recite, with frequency, the familiar passages from the Psalms and the Prophets which herald the return. It is interesting to observe, by the way, that Christian Protestant denominations which also accept the Biblical texts literally, look forward to this "return." To them, the reconstruction of Zion and the "return of the children of Israel" is not the climactic chapter in the Messianic process, but a necessary pre-requisite to the climax. The climax itself is to be the personal re-appearance of the Christ, or the Messiah. The re-gathering of the "children of Israel" into Zion must precede the resurrection.

Now it is an incontestable fact that *no* Orthodox Jew believes the present State of Israel has come into being *in a process which fulfills the injunctions of the Old Testament.* There are Orthodox Jews who actually repudiate the present Israeli sovereignty as a profanation of the Biblical texts. This attitude is most vigorously and dramatically represented in precisely that part of the State of Israel where the most traditional Judaism is observed—the Mea Shearim quarter of the city of Jerusalem. Here live the Netore Karta who regard the present State of Israel as a subversive phenomenon to their faith and who, themselves, indulge in frequent acts of defiance of the governmental authority of the State of Israel. There are less well known but equally convinced followers of the same position among the Orthodox Jews of the United States. These groups, at times, have made representations to the United Nations. They are particularly agitated over the claims to the New City of Jerusalem advanced by the State of Israel. They prefer internationalization of a Jerusalem once again uniting the Old and the New cities.

This attitude cannot necessarily be equated with an anti-Israeli position, although there are those in these groups who do oppose the present state and who agree it came about, not through the fulfillment of the word of God, but as a result of the secular-political activities of Zionism. It cannot, therefore, be a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy; and it does not represent, for these people, the Messianic dream. They regard Israel as a secular state, devoid of Zion.

Some reluctantly try to make their peace with it. Many bear the State a deep resentment, because it demeans the noble, spiritually pure and exalting climax of their religious faith. Even the appropriation of the name "Israel" is a source of resentment to many such

Jews. For to them "Israel" is a religious, spiritual concept, sanctified in a tradition of holiness which they do not find in the existent, secular State.

Finally, there remains to be considered those Orthodox—and perhaps also some Conservative—Jews who *do* regard Israel as the fulfillment of the Messianic dream. A fair amount of ink has been spilled on paper and a fair amount of oratory has been used to audiences in all parts of the world to prove or disprove this contention by examination of the relevant Biblical texts. And it may fairly be said that the net result of all this written and spoken verbiage is to end up with an argument, at the best, stalled on dead center. For if "the devil can quote Scripture," so can Zionists and anti-Zionists. It is a brave man, indeed, who today, in view of the still expanding archeological finds and the changing theories of history, would take an irrevocable stand on the precise meaning of most of the Biblical texts. The extensive controversies over the Dead Sea Scrolls, and their significance, is only one example in point. The furious debates which continue, seemingly without end, among the Biblical literalists, is another. To the less literal-minded, the Scriptures, long ago, became a source of great and inspired history, but ceased to be the literal, the exact, the definitive formulation of the Divine revelation, unalterable in specifics.

There will be no attempt therefore, in this article, to examine and debate the explicit meaning of the texts frequently cited, either to support or to oppose the contention that the present State of Israel is the fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies. It is sufficient to say only two things, by way of comment on the theory that Israel does represent such fulfillment.

1. None of the great national or international tribunals which have, in the past, wrestled with the political complexities of the Palestine problem has *ever* admitted that these ancient prophecies established any legal validity to the Zionist *political* claims to all, or part of, the Holy Land.

2. Even those Zionists who claim, *ex post facto*, that the State of Israel *does* fulfill the Biblical prophecies *do not* defend, as meeting the Biblical injunctions, the methods used to establish the State. The best these people can say is that the Zionist-nationalist movement became the Divine instrument. The closest these people come to logic is to plead the expediency and the necessity for human intervention and political efficiency to speed up the

process which, they fully realize, was to require *God's own time.* Their efforts to equate the result of Zionist power politics with the Biblical injunctions therefore, have produced an awkward situation. For as chief-of-state of their Messianic fulfillment is the secularist—probably the agnostic—David Ben Gurion. The Minions of the Lord—The Israel Defense Forces—conscript women. And in the politics of the State itself, the religionists are engaged in unremitting warfare with the essentially secular government over education, the definition of a "Jew," the questions of legitimacy resulting from conflicting ideas about valid marriages and other rites.

The most charitable construction which can be put upon the State of Israel therefore, in the context of considering its Biblical legitimacy, is that through methods having no sanction in the Bible at all, a political sovereignty has been established. In a majority population of Jews, a minority is still engaged in a furious, *political* battle to compel the State to adopt a character which *could* be equated with the Biblical prophecies. The equating is *not* accomplished today. The fulfillment is not even remotely near realization. Neither the process which gave birth to Israel nor the result, in the form of the State itself, can—by any theory with the integrity which is central to all genuine religion—be regarded as justified by the magnificent ethical and religious declarations of the spiritual giants whose words are immortalized in Scripture.

3

THE PROMISES OF GOD

THE RT. REV. JONATHAN G. SHERMAN, S.T.D.

THE HOLY BIBLE, embracing the Old and the New Testaments, is a unity of diverse writings setting forth the promises of God and their fulfillment in history. The word "Testament" is a Latin translation ("testamentum") of the Greek "diatheke," which, in turn, is a translation of the Hebrew "berith", meaning "Covenant." This is the term finally adopted as being all-inclusive of the sacred literature as well as indicative of its central theme. It is the proper starting-point for a study of the promises of God in the Bible.

God's Covenant With Israel

We find in the Old Testament a series of covenants beginning with one for all the descendants of Noah (Genesis 6:18 and 9:8-17), continuing with successive covenants between God and the patriarchs (Genesis 15:18ff; 26:2-5; 28:12-15; Exodus 2-24; 6:4), and culminating in the covenant with Israel on Mount Sinai (Exodus19:5; 24:8, 34:27). The covenant with Noah is unique in that it involves all of mankind as the descendants of Noah. In the following covenants, however, God deals with Israel in particular as a people "chosen to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6; 14:2). The essence of the covenant-idea is that of a contract between two parties involving definite obligations on each side. The terms of the various covenants between God and Israel in the Pentateuch remain constant, with God always taking the initiative.

God's promises to the patriarchs and to their descendants include:

1. *the land of Canaan:*

   And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:7f. See also Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:18-20; 24:7; 26:3; 28:4; 13; 35:12; 48:4; Exodus 6:4.)

2. *military victory over their enemies, the prior inhabitants of the land:*

   And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. (Exodus 34:10f. See also Genesis 15:19; Deuteronomy 7:1f and 19f; 8:20; 9:1-3.)

3. *economic prosperity:*

   Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers: and he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee. Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle. (Deuteronomy 7:12-14. See also Deuteronomy 6:3; 8:7-10, 18.)

Underlying these tangible promises is the personal relationship between God and the patriarchs and their descendants, "mercy" mentioned (above) in Deuteronomy 7:12—God's promise to be with his people (Genesis 26:3; 28:15; Exodus 6:7; Joshua 1:9) and to bless and to multiply them. (Genesis 13:16; 17:4-7; 26:4; 28:14; 48:4.) Israel's obligation under the covenant is obedience to God's commandments:

> Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. (Exodus 19:5. See also Genesis 26:5; Deuteronomy 4:1, 13; 5:2-22; 6:1-3, 24f; 7:9-16; ch. 8.)

The negative implication of this obligation is made explicit in Deuteronomy 8:19f:

> And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.

The terms of the covenant as given in these passages provide the background and the key to the understanding of the later historical and prophetical books of the Old Testament. The books of Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel tell of the successful invasion of Canaan, of the conquest of Israel's enemies, and of the establishment of the monarchy under Saul and David. The early chapters of I Kings tell of the prosperity and glory of Solomon's reign. This part of the tradition is a prolonged recital of God's fulfillment of his covenant promises to Israel. But with Israel it is otherwise. The people become corrupted by the surrounding Baalism and they sink into a state of mind in which they regard themselves as God's favourites, entitled to all of the material blessings promised under the covenant regardless of their own response to its moral requirements. The prophets are men raised up by God to pronounce judgment upon a nation that has failed to obey his commandments and to keep the covenant. Elijah is the first to protest:

> And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. (I Kings 19:10.)

In the same vein Amos, speaking for God, reminds the people:

> Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. Also I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years

> through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. (Amos 2-9f.)

God's faithfulness to Israel is plain for all to see. Amos then proceeds to the verdict:

> You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. (Amos 3-2. See also Hosea 11:1-4; 8:1; Jeremiah 11:9-13; 22-8f.)

The prophets are thus characterized by the note of doom: God is about to destroy the nation for its sins; Israel has forfeited its just claim to the promises of God.

This very note of destruction, so relentlessly proclaimed by the prophets, clears the ground, however, for a new interpretation of God's purpose. The history of Israel demonstrates that God is not primarily concerned with Israel's military conquests or geographical security or economic prosperity: the prophets' predictions are fulfilled when Israel is destroyed as a nation in 722 B.C. and when Judah is driven into exile in 586 B.C. What then? What God is interested in, say the prophets, is a relationship with Israel grounded in God's righteousness, justice, and mercy, a relationship between God and man that involves at every point a right relationship between man and man. They foresee the accomplishment of this purpose within the remnant of the nation that responds with repentance and remains faithful:

> Seek the Lord, and ye shall live," cries Amos. "Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph. (Amos 5:4,6,15. See also Isaiah 6:13; 10:22a.)

The classical summary of this strand in the prophets' teaching is found in Micah 6:8:

> He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Thus it may be said of Hebrew prophecy as a whole that while in the first instance it is addressed to immediate, concrete situations and as such bears a strongly negative accent, being aimed at the destruction of false notions and perverted worship, its final impact is positive and constructive in transposing the concept of the covenant into a higher key. The prophets were men inspired by God to apprehend and to proclaim the meaning of divinely guided events. The

change effected in this process may be diagrammed as follows:

Development	*Goal of the Covenant*	*Impediments*	*Condition*
Original Covenant	the land flowing with milk and honey	"enemies"	obedience
Prophetic Emphasis	righteousness, justice	sins	obedience

In the earlier period "salvation" refers to military victory wrought by God's "strong hand and stretched out arm" (Psalm 136:12); in prophetic teaching "salvation" means the spiritual blessings of true religion. Like all diagrams the above is an over-simplification and incurs the danger of misinterpretation. It would be a mistake to suppose that the development of Israel's religion is uniform or in one straight line. Old ideas and patterns of conduct die hard, and Hebrew thought is indifferent to logical system. Jeremiah, for example, says:

> For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye throughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. (Jeremiah 7:5-7).

And almost in the next breath he adds:

> And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim. (Jeremiah 7:13-15).

No doubt, the prophets would have insisted that righteousness, justice, and mercy were implicit in the original covenant (Jeremiah 11:1:8). But they would have further insisted that in Israel's subsequent history God was at work "as a refiner and purifier of silver" (Malachi 3:3) for the purpose of drawing out what was primary and essential and discarding what was secondary and incidental. The net result is clearly articulated in the utterance of Zacharias known as *The Benedictus* in St. Luke 1:68-79 which, although found in the New Testament, is "before Christ" and thoroughly Jewish in thought and terminology. The entire passage is an illuminating commentary

on the shift in the center of gravity, under the influence of the prophets, from lower to higher levels of religion in the Old Testament:

> 68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people;
> 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;
> 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began;
> 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
> 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;
> 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
> 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the land of our enemies might serve him without fear,
> 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.
> 76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
> 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,
> 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us,
> 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Prior to the prophets we might have anticipated the conclusion of verse 74 as follows:

> that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might enter and possess the land which God promised to our fathers.

But this is precisely what Zacharias does not say! Mark how he defines God's purpose:

> that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

It is in terms of the service of God without fear in holiness and righteousness and of salvation by the remission of sins that Israel now contemplates the fulfillment of God's promises under the covenant.

Interwoven with the covenant-history are two terms which become expressions of further promises of God: the Messiah and the Spirit.

The Messiah

The word "Messiah," literally "anointed," is first applied to Saul (I Samuel 10:1) and David (I Samuel 16:13) as signifying, in each case, the divine appointment to be king over Israel. In II Samuel 7:12 we find the kingship of David projected into the future as a royal line. At this point the kingship envisaged is, while by God's choice, purely human, of the earth, earthy, with an accent on political and military attributes, David being its ideal embodiment. As we have already observed, the monarchy plays an important role in the fulfillment of God's original promises under the covenant.

When we come to Isaiah (11:1-5) and Jeremiah (23:5,6) we find prophecies of a particular king, a descendant of David, who will be characterized by the additional attributes of true religion—wisdom, justice and righteousness, and the Spirit of the Lord. In other words, just as the prophets reinterpreted the covenant by raising it to a higher level of moral and spiritual insight, so in similar terms they reinterpret the concept of the Messiah.

Hundreds of years later, in the Maccabean period, a new school of thought arises which looks for the establishment of God's kingdom not by any familiar or natural means but by a supernatural, catastrophic intervention of God in history. In the book of Daniel God's agent in establishing his kingdom is given the title "Son of Man." This mysterious figure seems to personify "the people of the saints of the Most High," possibly the Jewish nation as a corporate personality, but in the pseudepigraphic Similitudes of Enoch (I Enoch, chs. 37-71) the Son of Man becomes a definite individual, also called the Anointed, the Elect, and the Righteous One. In Daniel the Son of Man is evidently a pre-existent, heavenly figure who comes "with the clouds of heaven" (Daniel 7:13f.)

It is to be noted that these various Messianic conceptions do not displace one another but are retained in the corporate consciousness of Israel with varying degrees of awareness. Thus, at the beginning of the Christian era, there are at least three ideas current as to what the Messiah will be—the political, the prophetic, and the apocalyptic.

The Spirit

The word "Spirit" is a translation of the Hebrew "ruach," a word with two meanings. On the one hand, it means "wind," an invisible power outside of man that produces visible effects. From very early times the wind was regarded as a manifestation of the invisible God at work in his world (Genesis 1:2). On the other hand, the word "ruach" signifies an element within man—"breath"—and breath is recognized as the principle of life (Genesis 2:7). The same term thus unites the objective concept of the power of God with the subjective concept of man's inner life. In the Old Testament the Spirit of God is a medium through which God is at work uniting man with himself. Rather crudely at first, as might be expected, in the Samson narratives the Spirit conveys simply raw physical strength, the power to accomplish superhuman feats (Judges 14:19). Again the prophets, themselves impelled by the Spirit, indicate that the true function of the Spirit is to bring man's life into moral conformity to God's will. Thus Micah:

> But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin. (Micah 3:8.)

And Ezekiel:

> And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezekiel 36:27.)

As we have already observed, Isaiah makes the endowment of the Spirit the mark of the promised Messiah:

> And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:2).

In the book of Joel the promise of the Spirit is universalized:

> And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. (Joel 2:28f.)

These passages afford a view of the Spirit as a divine, dynamic principle of unity in the relations of God and man, drawing out and weaving together from diverse and particular sources the various

elements in Israel's religion for a universal end. That end is the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah:

> Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more. (Jeremiah 31:31-34.)

Fulfillment

In the passages that have been cited it is apparent that the Old Testament looks beyond itself for the fulfillment of God's promises in the future. The New Testament is the record of that fulfillment. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet," is the constant refrain in St. Matthew's Gospel (1:22f; 2:23; 4:14-16; etc.)

The Synoptic Gospels narrate the development of Jesus' Messianic-consciousness and the acceptance of him as Messiah by his disciples. The inaugural vision occurs at his baptism:

> And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. (St. Mark 1:10f.)

Immediately Jesus is confronted with the question, "What kind of Messiah am I to be?" He is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to clarify his Messianic vocation (St. Mark 1:12). His temptations (St. Matthew 4:1-11; St. Luke 4:1-13) show how, by a process of elimination, he narrows the possible lines of activity to one. He rejects the apocalyptic, supernatural concept, first with regard to his own immediate, physical need (St. Matthew 4:2-4) and then with regard

to his own mental anxiety—"How do I know that I am the Messiah?" (St. Matthew 4:5-7). He rejects also the political dream, dear to the Zealots of his day (St. Matthew 4:8-10). There remains the prophetic ideal of Isaiah and Jeremiah—a Messiah characterized by the spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and counsel. Returning from the wilderness, he assumes his Messianic role as a prophet and teacher of true religion.

> From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (St. Matthew 4:17).
> And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all. (St. Luke 4:15).

The core of Jesus' preaching is his proclamation of the Fatherhood of God. The Pharisees, in their preoccupation with the refinement of the law, had made religion impossibly complicated. Jesus cuts through the current confusion by delineating the Father-child relationship as the essence of true religion. Integral to this conception is the child's imitation of his heavenly Father as the principle of the Christian ethic (St. Matthew 5:43-48). Another way of stating this is to say that from the beginning all the law and the prophets "hang" on two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Deuteronomy 6:5) and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18; St. Matthew 22:35-40).

> Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. (St. Matthew 5:17).
> Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. (St. Matthew 7:12).

Thus Jesus fulfills the promise of a "Second Moses" in Deuteronomy:

> The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken. (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22f.)

But very early in his ministry his interpretation of the law and his application of his own teaching in his healing ministry bring him into conflict with the Pharisees, and the prospect of his death becomes imminent.

> And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. (St. Mark 3:1-6).

As soon as Peter openly acknowledges him as Messiah, Jesus foretells his passion, linking his Messiahship with the prophetic ideal of the suffering servant portrayed in Isaiah 53. Now the stream of Jesus' Messianic-consciousness rises, as it were, over the obstacle presented by the prospect of his death, to a new and higher level. The concept of the apocalyptic Son of Man, temporarily rejected in the temptation, is now restored, purged of crude, popular, magical connotations. (St. Mark 8:27-31). Here it must be noted that the Messiah and the suffering servant in the Old Testament are entirely distinct and unrelated concepts. The Messiah, as God's agent in establishing the kingdom, must be a triumphant figure. On the other hand, the Old Testament itself pronounced a curse on him "that hangeth on a tree" (Deuteronomy 31-23). Hence, the disciples' bewilderment at Jesus' prophecy of his own death (St. Mark 8:32; 9:32; 10:32). In the upper room on the night of his betrayal Jesus, in a pre-enacted parable of his death on the cross, blesses and breaks the bread, saying, "This is my body;" and as he shares the cup, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (I Corinthians 11:23-26). Before Pilate he states, "My kingdom is not of this world" (St. John 18:36), showing plainly that the old covenant with its territorial interests is now null and void. Before the high priest Jesus claims Son of Man Messiahship in the highest apocalyptic sense (St. Mark 14:62).

Jesus died under the curse of the Jewish law. But his resurrection on the third day was the evidence to his disciples of God's vindication of his Messiahship (Romans 1:4). On the cross and in his resurrection he had met and gained the victory over man's chief enemies, sin and death, a victory shared with all who accepted him as Lord (I Corinthians 15:54-56).

St. Luke presents the entire life of Jesus, from the prophecy of his birth to his resurrection appearances to the disciples, as the supreme instance of the work of the Holy Spirit (St. Luke 1:35,67; 2:26; 3:16; 4:1, 14, 16-21; 11:13; 24-49; Acts 1:2,5). Jesus' final word to his apostles before his ascension is to confirm "the promise of the Father" that they are soon to be baptized with the Holy Spirit (St. Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4f).

> And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them

> cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:1-4).

In this event the manifestation of the Spirit is the gift of tongues. Peter is quick to refer to Joel's prophecy and its fulfillment (Acts 2:16:21; Joel 2:28-32). But the deeper implications of this experience are only gradually understood. The Spirit is realized to be the dynamic principle of unity, given by God the Father, in the new society issuing from the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The requirements for membership in this society are repentance and acceptance of Jesus as Messiah and Lord (Acts 2:36, 38). One normally becomes a member of this family by adoption in baptism (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6), receiving thereby the gift of the Spirit. Peter says, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39), hardly perceiving the universal import of his own words. Peter's later experience with Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10:1-11:18) opens his eyes to God's wider purpose as embracing both Jews and Gentiles. But it is St. Paul who clearly grasps and expounds the revolutionary character of the new covenant.

In his letters St. Paul, with a richness of thought that defies systematic formulation, rings the changes on this theme. To the Jews of his day who were still in bondage to the law as the be-all and end-all of true religion St. Paul shows that God's purpose in giving the law has been fulfilled in Christ.

> For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Romans 10:4).
>
> In him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14).

Faith in Christ has therefore replaced the works of the law as the condition of man's peace with God (Romans 3:20-28; 5:1). There remains no ground for discrimination between Jew and Greek, "for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Romans 10:12).

> Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs

according to the promise. (Galatians 3-26:29).

Those who have entered into the new covenant relationship with God in Christ are the true Israel of God! (Galatians 6:16). This has been God's purpose, the mystery of his will, before the foundation of the world: that "in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ" and that "the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (Ephesians 1:10; 3:6).

In the new covenant the believer is united in baptism with his crucified and risen Lord (Romans 6:1-11). The work of the Spirit in effecting this union is to reproduce in the individual believer and in the fellowship of believers the mind and character of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16). I Corinthians 13 delineates the supreme gift of the Spirit as *agape*—"charity." Note that St. Paul's exposition of *agape* is also a portrait in miniature of Christ himself: "Jesus suffered long, and was kind. . .Jesus never failed." The Spirit is given to those who are "in Christ" to the end that they may manifest the same quality of life.

> The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22f).

Conclusion

In the Old Covenant God promised to the children of Israel military victory over their enemies in order that they might enter into the land flowing with milk and honey on the condition of Israel's obedience to his commandments. Israel failed to keep the covenant and so forfeited the promises of God. But God promised a New Covenant, to be written not on tables of stone but in the hearts of his people (Jeremiah 31:31-33; II Corinthians 3:2f). Of this New Covenant Jesus is the mediator (Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15). In place of victory over human enemies Jesus gives us victory over sin and death (I Corinthians 15:55-57). In place of the land of Canaan he gives us his kingdom (St. Luke 12:32). In place of milk and honey he gives us the fruit of the Spirit—love and joy and peace and forgiveness. Verily, "in him all the promises of God are Yes"! (II Corinthians 1:20).

4

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND ZIONIST CLAIMS

DR. BURTON THURSTON*

AT THE OUTSET it must be patently clear that Zionism does not build from a religious foundation. This is not to say that there is any aversion to the use of historic religious sentiment to give emotional force to achieve its goals. There is nothing which would indicate that Theodore Herzl, Chaim Weizmann or David Ben Gurion were consciously trying to build a new religious community or hold a religious revival in the sense of Ezra or Nehemiah.

1. The Ancient Hebrew Concept of the Kingdom

The kingdom of God in the Hebrew scriptures is primarily a religious concept no matter how it is worked out in earthly terms. Prior to the charismatic leadership of King Saul it was an earthly theocracy which served as the government of the Hebrews. Saul was succeeded by a soldier-king by the name of David. His rule was given an unjustified mystical character by later writers and many messianic traditions grew up around this process of idealization. After the rule of Solomon the kingdom broke up and serious religious and cultural differences are evident as long as the two divisions survi-

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ved. But, even under these circumstances the throne of Yahweh is considered to be the ultimate in rule and authority.

During the exile in Babylon in the 6th century B.C., there were many prophecies about the future rule of the Hebrews after they were cured of their idolatry and purged of their Canaanite tendencies. It is from this period that most dispensational interpreters find their quotations to show that events in the 20th century are a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy.

Isaiah of Jerusalem makes it clear that the Lord will move a second time to restore his people from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros (upper Egypt), Cush (Ethiopia), Elam (between Iraq and Iran), Shinar (Shat al-Arab), Hammath (Northern Jordan Valley), and the Islands of the Sea (The Mediterranean coasts).

The first move would have been the Exodus and the second refers to the Babylonian exile which was completed in the 6th century B.C. A similar expression to that of Isaiah is found also expressed by Jeremiah. (Jeremiah, 23:5-8)

2. Belief in the Kingdom After the Return Under Ezra

Following the return under Ezra and Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel, a new emphasis on Universalism of the type of Isaiah of Babylon gains ground. He speaks of the character of a redeemed nation and God's deliverance. (Isaiah, 60:1-3)

There is little question but that the central idea of the Kingdom in Hebrew canonical writings centers in the Hebrew people and later in a changed Judaism following the Exile. The form of the community after the Exile is a priest-state. It was the religious interests which gave the main impetus to the return and rebuilding of the city and temple. Political independence was not a serious issue. Politically the country was under Persian and Hellensistic rule.

3. Radical Revision Under the Maccabees

Following the Maccabean revolt in 167 B.C. it was not until 142 B.C. that the Syrian garrison was removed from Jerusalem. At that time the Hasmonean high priest and military commander had control of Jerusalem and most of the area which made up the tribal inheritance of ancient Judah. This was only possible due to the weakness of Syria, but in 135 Jerusalem was conquered by the Syrians and

Roman interference prevented the Syrians from destroying the city and ending the Hasmonean rule.

When Antiochus VII died in 128, John Hyrcanus again began the conquest of territory. As he abandoned his religious principles which had motivated his family he broke with the Pharisees and embraced the Sadducees. The latter approved of a hellenizing policy and were interested primarily in political development. They were opposed to any religious enthusiasm such as represented in the Pharisees. The Pharisees had no interest in political supremacy and political freedom. They had supported Judas until the Temple worship was restored.

Hyrcanus had extended the borders of Judah to include Medeba, and the Idumean cities which were converted by force to Judaism. He destroyed the temple at Gerezim and levelled the city of Samaria. He extended the borders to cover most of the area ruled by Solomon. With the support of Rome he remained independent of Syria.

His violence and treachery were exceeded by his sons. Brothers and mothers were disposed of and mercenary troops were used to control the Jews. Both Aristobulus and Alexander, his sons, abandoned the religious foundations for political power and extension of the territory by destroying those areas which refused to become Jewish. To them the Kingdom was a political-ethnic entity in which piety and observance were insignificant. The Pharisees preferred to be politically under the Syrians as long as they were free to practise their religion. Internal feuds, until Pompey came, were continued. He halted the whole problem when he entered the city of Jerusalem in 63 and made the city and countryside tributary to Rome. Most of the Hasmonean area was placed under Roman Syria while Hyrcanus II was allowed to function as high priest without the title of King. Even this freedom was ended as Judea became absorbed in Roman administration. The Romans soon placed them under a dynasty of Idumean kings and the continued agitation of the national party brought on the destruction of both the city and the temple in 70 A.D.

4. Normative Judaism and the Radical View of Jesus

The view of the Kingdom of God among the religious Jews in the time of Jesus is almost hopelessly confused with the views of the national party at the same time. The statements in the New Testament which are negative in form are at least suggestive of what it

might have been.

Jesus' remarks about a kingdom divided against itself (Matthew, 12:25) may be a direct reference to the fiasco of the Hasmonean rule and a direct judgment on Jewish national ambitions. The enigmatic statement about rich men entering the Kingdom (Matthew, 19:24) would be a judgment on Sadducean materialism. Paul's expression, the Kingdom of God not in word, but in power, (I Corinthians, 4:20) can allude to the impossible maze of words in rabbinic interpretations and legal intricacies.

On the positive side he suggests a possible definition, radical in form: it belongs to children (Mark, 10:14); to the poor (Luke, 6:20); God is on the throne (Hebrews, 1:8); the righteous shine as the sun (Matthew,13:43); it is in your midst or in your grasp (Luke, 17:21); it is righteousness, peace and joy (Romans, 14:17); it comes without observation (Luke, 17:20); it spreads like heaven (Matthew, 13:33); and it is not of this world (John, 18:36). From the standpoint of Jesus, the idea of a religious nationalism is an anachronistic absurdity.

5. *Rabbinic Understanding and the Diaspora*

In the New Testament there are sufficient statements which clearly indicate that the kingdom is a non-national rule of God in the world. One can speak with certainty about a spiritual kingdom as coming from expressions in the New Testament. This same clarity does not come out in Rabbinic writings.

Late Judaism clearly speaks of the Kingdom (*malakoth shamayim*) in an eschatological sense. The time of the Messiah is not really of this age in which we live. In Tractate Berakoth (Tractate Berakoth, 1:5), this seems to be the clear impression: "The days of your life means this world only, but ALL the days of your life is to include the days of the Messiah." What the Jews longed for was to participate in the golden age of the nation as depicted by the prophets. It was the time of the universal reign of God. In this expectancy the righteous dead are to be raised and, according to the Midrash, all the tyrants and the apostates among the Jews will perish in the crisis which ushers in the new age. It was a deeply religious view of history in which all of the righteous share in the rewards and all of the wicked perish.

The religious expectation is drawn from prophetic statements which in true rabbinic fashion ignored any historical context, fulfillment or relationship. Their hermeneutical principles reduced all

scripture to a collection of wisdom sayings. But the recovery of national independence, power, prosperity and peace, according to the Rabbis, was conditioned. This would not come about apart from the moral reformation and regeneration of the Jewish people.

The Rabbis can quote from 8th century or 5th century prophets and apocrypha in the same breath. All prophecy is unitary in Rabbinic thought. At one time it was applied to the Hasmoneans as evidence in Psalm 110 with its acrostic for Alexander Jannaeus, but the corruption of the family was so complete that the religious people begged Pompey to get rid of them. When Bar Cocheba (Koziba) was acclaimed as the Messiah by Akiba, this excitement ended with the Jews being barred from Jerusalem by Hadrian. The Sibylline Oracles speak of the appearance of the immortal king while Rome rules over Egypt.

The Rabbis said if Israel should keep one Sabbath, as prescribed, the Messiah would come. Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai says 'two.' At the conclusion of the Passover Seder is a significant prayer on this subject:

> Thou, Pure One, who dwellest on high,
> Gather us into a mighty congregation.
> Soon may Israel, the seed of thy planting,
> Redeemed come singing to Zion.
> Next year may we celebrate in Jerusalem.

Epstein in his book on Judaism[1] has a summary of Rabbinic teaching on this theme:

> The Kingdom of God in the scheme of Judaism will be ushered in by the Messiah. The Messiah will be the central dominating figure of an age which will witness the reign of righteousness on earth, a righteousness which will bring universal peace and plenty, plenty of the things necessary for a righteous life, without taking away the need for sacrifice on behalf of ever-widening and growing ideals.

Most of the Rabbis agreed that this deliverance would not come without a religious preparation of repentance. Some thought that they would be forced to repent, others thought that the time of delive-

[1] Isidore Epstein, *Judaism: A Historical Presentation.* (Penguin Books Ltd. Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: 1959), p. 139.

rance had already passed because they had not repented. A few thought that God would bring deliverance according to his time plan whether they had repented or not. This latter view led to an expression in the Mishnah that an excessive corruption would actually bring the Messiah.[2] In any case, with the Rabbis the Kingdom is the work of the Messiah.

6. *The Zionist Attitude Towards the Kingdom*

As indicated at the outset, Zionism was not a religious movement. Neither Herzl, Weizmann nor Ben Gurion were motivated by the religious concept of the Kingdom as defined above.

Since Ben Gurion was the person in power in 1947 and since he was the person who declared the independence of a Zionist state, his views are significant to any understanding of the aims of the Zionist movement.

He became interested in Zionism through the Polish society called "Lovers of Zion." He was a religious person until the age of seven and has had no interest in religion since that time. As a student of Jewish history he developed a great passion for the Hebrew language and a homeland for the Jews. The concern of Zionism was "Eretz Israel." It was a particular piece of land and a messianic zeal developed in Jewry over it. It was no religious quest according to Ben Gurion but it was a territorial and ethnic quest. He said that they sought this not from God but Balfour, Lloyd George and General Smuts.

The appeal of Weizmann was a demand to right the past wrongs in Europe. Ben Gurion told the Colonial Secretary of Britain, Lord Lloyd:

> ...the driving force behind our movement is lack of a homeland... Palestine is our homeland, and we must live there as in our own home. Under Arab rule our national life would be destroyed. Take my word for it, we shall never agree to minority status in Palestine; we shall never submit to Arab rule; and all the might of the British Empire will not make us do so."[3]

After the declaration of Independence, which General George

[2] Sotah, 9:15.

[3] Moshe Pearlman, *Ben Gurion Looks Back in Talks with Moshe Pearlman* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London: 1965), p. 87.

Marshall advised Ben Gurion not to carry out, he began systematically to eliminate the religious element from the state. He said "I tried to keep religion out of government and out of politics as far as possible. As far as the state is concerned we were successful. Israel is a secular state.[4]

As a concession to the religious Jews who opposed this new Hasmonean administration, certain religious words were adopted with a general assurance that the prophetic vision would be realized after the state had matured. They have made much out of the mystery of the land and that one land will bring about the fulfillment of the righteous visions of the prophets. This latter point is being severely challenged by the Jews themselves. In the *Wild Goats of Ein Gedi* we have this quotation:

> Whether or not the Jews have been brought back to the land of Israel for nothing is the question which concerns those who are interested in the mystery of Israel. As we have seen in our encounters with Christians, Moslems and Jews in today's Holy Land, not all of them are convinced with Bialik that the end result of the Balfour Declaration will be a "new Gospel, the gospel of redemption, for the whole of humanity." It may be as one of the priests said, "just a mistake." Those who think it is more than a mistake confront a problem in modern Israel. If the return of the people of Israel to their ancestral land is destined to reveal "great lights" of spirit that Rabbi Kook talked about, where is the evidence? If two thousand years of survival and martyrdom have resulted in the establishment of but another shade in the twentieth century patchwork of nationalism, was it worthwhile? And where, in modern Israel, is there any sign of this return connected with the "Divine Matter?"

Another quote from the same book has Yigael Yadin saying:

> "I don't think Kurzweil is right in saying that we have confused the 'rock of Israel' with Israeli patriotism or that nationalism is our religion. Some day I am going to answer him.... But I don't think that Ben Gurion is right either, in the way he uses a term like Messianism. Ben Gurion's Messianism has been separated from its other-worldly dimension, overhumanized and secularized."[5]

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 220.

[5] *The Wild Goats of Ein Gedi*, p. 360.

7. Christian Zionists

There exists a type of Zionist sub-culture in a residue of 19th century evangelical dispensationalism. This anti-intellectual non-historical approach to the Bible has been a great support to the Zionists. They have encouraged these people to relate Bullinger's dispensationalism with its fulfillment of non-applicable prophecies to what is happening in Palestine. The resistance of the Arabs is identified as the prolegomena to the battle of Armageddon, the emphasis on the unbelieving Jews is to prove that the believing Christians are soon to be raptured out of the world and all of the Jews will be converted at once in their homeland. The certainty with which these things are believed is matched only by its Biblical inaccuracy.

One of the most difficult hermeneutical problems is to be able to work through the maze of literature on the Hebrews, Jews, Palestine, promises and conditions and then come to grips with the modern application of Biblical terms to things which are now in evidence. Most do not make the effort and identify all that the Bible says about Israel with the modern Zionist state in Palestine. This gives a partial explanation of the fundamentalist proof text support of modern Israel. Over all of this the non-religious Zionist must be quietly amused and satisfied.

5

IS THE OLD TESTAMENT ZIONIST?

DR. WILLIAM HOLLADAY*

THE ZIONISTS HAVE USED many kinds of argumentation in the past 75 years—political, historical, and religious. Now the political and historical arguments can be met by anti-Zionist political and historical arguments: one can point to facts and factors which the Zionists have ignored or bypassed. But religious arguments are harder to deal with, since they are hardly open to proof or disproof: it seems, to the non-Zionist, that the rockbottom argument, the Zionist's "ace in the hole," is simply: "Anyway, God gave us the land, once and for all": and it seems that the basis of this assertion is the Old Testament.

Now the Old Testament is a thick book—about three and a half times as thick as the New Testament, and about four times as thick as the Qur'an. And not only thicker, but far more mixed in its contents, and written over a far longer period of time, than either the New Testament or the Qur'an: the Old Testament took shape over a period of ten or fifteen centuries; and it is an easy book, therefore, to get lost in.

And because of the whole Zionist movement, climaxed now by the establishment of the state of Israel, a state taking its very name from the Old Testament people, the Old Testament has been shunned, has become taboo among Arabs. Arab Christians have not wanted

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to discuss it; Arab preachers have avoided preaching from it; and a whole generation has grown up with only the foggiest notion of what the Old Testament is all about. But we should not allow the Zionists to teach us what the Old Testament is all about, and in a university community we should not be bound by taboos. Therefore we raise the question tonight, "Is the Old Testament Zionist?" An easy question to ask, but not an easy question to answer, since it takes us through three thousand years of history, and religious interpretation of that history. What follows, then, can only be an outline of an answer to the question!

I begin by making a distinction between ancient Israel and modern Israel. This distinction is already suggested by the two English words *Israelite* and *Israeli*—"Israelite" being the name we give to the inhabitant of ancient Israel, and "Israeli" the name we give to the inhabitant of the modern state. All the European languages that I know maintain this distinction—thus, in French, *Israélite et Israélien*. I mention this because the Arabic word *Isra'ili* has to do for both, and the word "Israel" in all languages has to do for both. So I am going to use mathematical subscript numbers this evening to keep us clear on the matter: I will say "Israel_1" when I am talking about ancient Israel, and "Israel_2" for the modern state of the same name. Because we cannot take it for granted that these two are identical. Names tend to take on a semi-magical quality in our minds; we begin to assume that a name *inevitably* communicates an essential reality: we forget that names are quite arbitrary, and that the founders of the modern state could just as well (from our point of view) have called their state "Jacob," or "Zion," or "David," or "X." They chose the name they did because they wanted to assert their belief in a continuity, even an identity, between their state and Israel. But their assertion does not make the identity real; we must still explore the question of the nature of the relationship between Israel_1 and Israel_2: there may be both continuity and discontinuity here.

All right, then, Israel_2 is a Zionist state; but was Israel_1 Zionist? We must come to understand what Israel_1 was and what she claimed to be. (Nations seem to be feminine in English, I don't know why!) The question resolves itself into three questions—a question of political history, a question of religious history, and a question of theology. (1) The question of political history is this: What, actually, was Israel_1? — at what period did this people enter Palestine? — what

were her relations with other peoples living there? — how much political control did she have, and for what period of time? — and what was her corporate life when she did not have effective political control? (2) The question of religious history is this: What, in the Old Testament, did $Israel_1$ *claim* that *God* was doing through these events of political history? — what did she claim God's purpose and intentions to be through these events? — and, note well, this question can be answered quite aside from the question as to whether $Israel_1$'s claim is ultimately *true*: that is, God may not exist, or, if he does, he may be quite neutral about $Israel_1$, or opposed to her, and we may still answer the question about her claim to God's purpose through her. (3) The question of the *truth* of her claim is the theological question, our third question: Is the claim of $Israel_1$ about God's purpose through her true? — or, more generally, What was God's purpose, if any, through $Israel_1$?

I

First, then, the question of political history. About 1220 B.C. a group of Northwest Semitic tribes, calling themselves "Israel," who had been led out of Egypt by their leader Moses, invaded Palestine. In this invasion they were victorious over several city-states inhabited mostly by other Northwest Semitic groups. The Israelites settled in the central hill country and only gradually extended their control over the whole area. It is important to note that there was evidently little large-scale slaughter of the previous inhabitants, in spite of late theological theorizing: mostly the Israelites seem to have settled down alongside the earlier peoples—their cultures certainly interpenetrated. In fact, they themselves were almost wiped out a century after their invasion, by a Western people, the *Philistines*, who, as we see, gave their name to *Palestine;* and it was only about two hundred years after the Israelite invasion that the city-state of Jerusalem was captured, that the Philistine threat was overcome, and a stable political order was established, under King David, about 1000 B.C. David built his empire up by a series of brilliant campaigns at a time of Egyptian and Assyrian weakness; he seems to have extended his control down to the Gulf of Aqaba, to use the modern name, and up through the Transjordan area, including what is now Amman; he put a garrison of soldiers in Damascus, and the king of Hama owed him allegiance. And in this empire were of course a great number of

non-Israelite peoples.

This empire built up by David was short-lived, however; after the death of his son Solomon, roughly eighty years later, it split into a northern half (also called, confusingly, "Israel" — Israel, a" I suppose we should have to call it!) and a southern half (called "Judah", from which our word "Jew" derives). The northern kingdom lasted for another two hundred years, often weak, rarely strong; occasionally it was in active warfare against its sister-kingdom to the south. It did not keep control of Damascus—sometimes Syria was at war with Israel, as was the case about 880 B.C.; sometimes in alliance with Israel against Assyria, as was the case about 740 B.C.; but this northern kingdom, in the end wracked by coups d'état and anarchy, and hard-pressed by Assyria, fell to Assyria in 721 B.C. and her leadership departed.

But if the northern kingdom kept the name "Israel," nevertheless the southern kingdom, Judah, held the capital Jerusalem, and ultimately produced the Old Testament. She had the advantage of a single ruling house, descended from David, and a greater distance from Assyria, but she survived after the fall of the north only by paying heavy tribute-money as a puppet kingdom to Assyria. She emerged from her humiliation when her overlord Assyria grew weak, at the end of the seventh century B.C., but her independence was short-lived, since Babylonia replaced Assyria as the threatening power from the east, and Babylonia conquered her in 587 B.C. Kingship in the line of David was thus wiped out forever, and, again, her leading citizens were deported eastward.

The land was not empty of Israelites; there were peasants in the north who survived, and some of them emerged into the light of day later on, in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., as the Samaritans; and there were peasants, too, in the south, and so some continuity of life. But any consciousness of nationhood and of religious integrity resided not with the folk who stayed behind, but with the exiles from the south who were in Babylon during the years of the sixth century.

When Babylon fell to Persia in 540 B.C., those Jews who wished to return to Palestine were allowed to do so, and a good many did, though probably not a majority. Palestine then formed a province of the Persian empire, then of the empire of Alexander the Great, then of the Egyptian sector of Alexander's empire ruled by the Ptolemies. Then, at the end of the third century B.C., the Ptolemies lost Palestine to the Seleucids, whose capital was at Antioch; the

Seleucids, in contrast to the Ptolemies, were active in trying to unite their subject peoples around the focus of Hellenistic culture. A sizeable number of Jews in Palestine vigorously resisted these efforts, and gained political independence under the Maccabees, beginning in 165 B.C.; but the difficulties of governing a small state in Palestine along the lines of Jewish absolutism were formidable, and there followed a whole succession of alliances, factions, coups d'état, and civil wars to which Rome finally put an end in 63 B.C., working either directly, or, later, indirectly through a puppet like Herod. But Rome in turn found it increasingly difficult to rule Palestine, and major war broke out twice — 66-73 A.D. and 132-135 A.D., after which time organized Jewish life ceased in Palestine except for quiet rabbinic schools; though of course there continued to be a fluctuating Jewish population all through the Middle Ages.

To summarize, then: the ancient people calling itself Israel came into Palestine at the end of the 13th century B.C., established coherent power and administration over the whole area at the beginning of the 10th century, split in two after 80 years. The northern half came to an end in the 8th century, the southern half at the beginning of the 6th; the Jews thereafter were able to control events politically only during the Maccabean period in the middle of the 2nd century B.C., and more briefly during the uprisings against Rome. So on the basis of the bare historical events, the Zionist claim to the land carries little weight, as we all recognize; but it is its religious dimension that forces it upon us, and it is to this which we now turn.

II

What did Israel_1 *claim* that *God* was doing *through* the events of political history? Our resources for answering this question are found, of course, in the Old Testament, though, parenthetically, we might ask a preliminary question: how representative of the religious thinking of Israel_1 *is* the Old Testament — does it represent a total view, or only a partial view of the religious thinking of Israel_1? There is no way to answer this question with precision, because we have no body of material from the same period by which to counter the Old Testament claim. (The Samaritan material is mostly late, was deeply influenced by Christian and Muslim theological thinking, and in any case does not figure in the Zionist problem. And both the sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament date from a period

later than that of the Old Testament, and both of them independently claim religious continuity *with* the Old Testament.)

Nevertheless, there are strong internal indications within the Old Testament itself that it represents not a total view of the religious thinking and practice of $Israel_1$, but a kind of "minority report:" there is much within the laws of the Old Testament that seems to be a reflection of an ideal rather than actual practice, and there is much within the poetry of the prophets that cries out against the prevailing practice and the prevailing assumptions of the time—I dare say there was a great deal in the life of $Israel_1$ which did not measure up to the outlook of the Old Testament. But, since the Old Testament is the witness of what became normative for the faith and practice of $Israel_1$, we use it to answer the question before us now.

So, once more: what was the outlook of the Old Testament?—what did $Israel_1$ claim God was doing through her history? It is beyond our means, tonight, to survey all of Old Testament theology — much that is important we shall have to pass by. We will affirm without discussion that $Israel_1$ witnessed to a God who reveals himself in history and who is concerned for justice and for righteousness. What we are concerned about particularly is what $Israel_1$ had to say about her covenant with God, about her taking over the land, about the nature of her community — all those matters which have a bearing on Jewish nationalism today. And on these questions we find both agreement, and real disagreement, within the Old Testament itself.

The agreement first. All the relevant portions of the Old Testament agree in the claim that God had done something altogether special for $Israel_1$ — in taking the initiative to rescue her out of Egypt, and to present her, then, with a kind of contract — the biblical word is "covenant" (in Arabic: *'ahd*) — setting forth the pattern of behavior (in the Law) which was her permanent obligation to this rescuing God. And a further demonstration of the love and concern of this God was the granting of the land of Palestine to her: she was to obey this God, and God in turn would give her the laboratory-space, so to speak, in which she could work out the life of obedience expected of her by God. Let me quote Jeremiah's expression of this conviction:

> Thus says the Lord, I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it became guilty; evil came upon them, says the

> Lord... Thus says the Lord, what wrong did your fathers find in me, that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless? They did not say, Where is the Lord, who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells? And I brought you in to a plentiful land, to enjoy its fruits and its good things. (2:2-3, 5-7)

(I realize that this idea of God granting Israel the land makes us deeply uneasy, concerned as we are about Zionism: but let us withold our judgment until we see what Israel_1 did with the idea.)

Agreement on these things, yes: but there is much else on which the Old Testament is not unanimous at all. Perhaps the basic question not only for us this evening, but for Israel_1 in ancient times, is this: What does it mean to be the people of God? Granted that Israel_1 understood herself to be under obligation to God — how, as a matter of fact, was she to organize her common life so that God's great experiment with her might be a success in his sight?

One of the great debates in the earliest days was over the *nature of the government* of Israel_1. We have already seen that in the earliest days (from the end of the 13th century B.C. to the end of the 11th), Israel_1 had only an informal control over the land. Actually, to be more specific, Israel_1 was a loose league of twelve tribes united by their sense of common obligation to God, expressed in Law and battle: they renewed their contract to God, and therefore to each other, periodically, and, when military emergencies arose, they united themselves for war. They acknowledged no man as their leader, except for temporary military leaders. This arrangement, which Israel_1 felt to be unique and to express her understanding that her only king was God himself, worked tolerably well against the relatively weak tribes already in Palestine, or against raiders from the desert; but it did not work at all against the better-organized Philistines, who had invaded from the sea. And in order to meet this new and unprecedented threat, there were those in Israel_1 who called for a king — for permanent hereditary leadership — but our sources in the book of I Samuel all show great uneasiness about the whole affair. One source says it is all right to have a permanent leader so long as you call him, not "king," which is a bad word, but "prince" (so in chapter 9); the other source says that having a king is wrong, but God has

allowed it anyway because of the sin of the people (so in chapter 8). Either way, they were uneasy! And when David established his kingship in Jerusalem, a whole new theology had to be worked out, of a covenant between God and (not $Israel_1$ in general but) David, in order to justify the actual turn of events. In the meantime, the folk in the north rejected this new theology, and this is the religious background of the split between north and south. So: was kingship a good thing or a bad thing? The Old Testament was not sure, in the beginning; but by the time more than four hundred years of the Davidic line had ruled in Jerusalem, nobody questioned it any more — nothing succeeds like success.

Nevertheless, though kingship as an institution came to be accepted as part of God's will, always it was taken for granted that a specific king stood under the judgment as well as the blessing of God. The prophet Nathan, in the tenth century B.C., rebuked David for the latter's affair with Bathsheba, and David admitted his guilt; the prophet Amos, in the eighth century, spoke of the coming downfall of King Jeroboam II in the north; Isaiah, a little later, rebuked King Ahaz for his frightened seeking after military aid from Assyria; Jeremiah, late in the seventh century, rebuked King Jehoiakim for his exploitation of the poor. And these judgments against the rulers come up again and again, without apology, in the pages of the Old Testament. King after king was judged unworthy of God's support.

And, inevitably, there were other questions that came up in the minds of the Israelites, particularly as the great empires, Egypt, or Assyria, or Babylonia, pounded at their gates. Let me deal briefly with three of these questions, all interrelated.

First, did God give the land unconditionally to $Israel_1$? It is easy for us to assume that the answer is "yes," but the actual views of the Old Testament are not so simple. Obviously the Old Testament assumed the giving of the land to be a *necessary consequence* of the covenant; I have already suggested that the land was a kind of "laboratory" for the working out of covenant obedience. But the very *nature of the covenant* forced $Israel_1$ to be aware of the *contingency* of its stay on the land. Thus the book of Leviticus, which represents one legal tradition, insists that the land really belongs to God, and that God is only, so to speak, leasing the land to $Israel_1$: "*The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me.*" (25:23) That is, the people in this passage are understood to be resident aliens, and so are granted no permanent ownership.

(What a fascinating bit of law *this* is for Zionists to consider!)

Again, the book of Deuteronomy, which represents another legal tradition, insists that Israel_1 will remain on the land only so long as she is *obedient*: thus, in 30:16-18, we read:

> If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God... by loving the Lord your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments...then you shall live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear...I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess.

Here the stay on the land is not presented to Israel as a perpetual right, but as a gift, a privilege, something that can be withdrawn if the people are disobedient.

And, indeed, *exile* was a threat which all the pre-exilic prophets held over the nation if they were not found faithful to God. Amos has a memorable pun on Gilgal, which was the name of a cult center — where, some think, a *conquest* festival was celebrated periodically (so G. on Rad, *Theol. of the O.T.*, Engl. ed. I 297): Amos said, *kî gilgal galoh yigleh* — "for surely Gilgal *shall go into exile.*" And then, as Assyria did exile leaders of the north, and as Babylonia did exile the leaders of the south, the prophets were able to say, see, we told you so. In fact, religiously speaking, it was the exile of the southerners to Babylon in the sixth century B.C. that is the great dividing-line in the Old Testament, the event that changed the theological mood more than anything else.

An American newspaper editor once said that the job of a newspaper is to comfort the afflicted, and to afflict the comfortable. Well, this would be a good description of the job of the Old Testament prophet as well: in times of prosperity he warned darkly of doom, but when the people seemed without hope, he felt called upon to bring hope. And so it was that, during the terrible days of the Babylonian exile, when the Jews sang hatefully of wanting to bash little Babylonian babies' brains out (to refer to Psalm 137), during those days, and after the exile, too, when it still seemed to the Jews that God's great experiment was fizzling out, then it was that the prophets began to speak in dazzling colors of the great rewards that God would bring. Ezekiel spoke of the return of all the exiles, and

the author of Isaiah 40-55 did too; and the prophets began to sing of a new Israel, whose territory would be even greater than before.

Feeding into these poems of the post-exilic prophets was some pre-exilic phraseology which we can only call Oriental rhetoric and bombast. Thus, for example, there is Psalm 72, which is pre-exilic: it is a royal psalm, coming out of the time when there had been real kings; and its flavor is the flattery of any Oriental court. The singer first wishes the king long life by voicing the hope that he will live as long as the sun and moon endure (verse 5), and then offers the following, in verse 8: "*May he [the king] have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.*" This, I repeat, is simply Oriental rhetoric, for this territory extends from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean, and from the Euphrates River to wherever the ends of the earth are. But such rhetoric became programmatic in post-exilic times of what God would surely do, to reward his oppressed people, ultimately, when the end-time comes: — and so we see emerging all the apparatus of supernatural eschatology, the miraculous events of the coming end of history, the re-establishment of the kingship of David, the defeat of all enemies, and even the re-creation of nature so that the sun will shine 24 hours a day, and the sea dry up: and it is in this frame of mind that we find written such a passage as Zechariah 9:10, which comes from the late Persian or even Greek period: universal peace, and the indefinite extension of the territory of Israel:

> I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

We have said that the prophets comforted the afflicted, and afflicted the comfortable. This contrast in mood between the post-exilic and the pre-exilic period is illustrated equally well by what some of them had to say about the covenant. We have already affirmed that the idea of the covenant was central to the claim of $Israel_1$ in the Old Testament, but this idea, in our day, makes us uneasy — it seems to us too much as if God played favorites. How can we take seriously any religious testimony, we ask, which focusses on a special contract between God and one particular group?

The prophet Amos, in the eighth century B.C., certainly did

not question the validity of the covenant, but what he did do, unforgettably, was to lash out against any complacency, any smugness, any sense of superiority the Israelites might be tempted to develop because of the covenant. Thus, at the beginning of the third chapter of Amos, we read a word of judgment from God: "*You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.*" That is, you will be punished because you have been chosen by God (not *in spite* of your having been chosen, but *because* of your having been chosen.) To be chosen means responsibility, not privilege; a harder life, not an easier one; a keener sword of judgment, not comfort. Again, in Amos 9:7, we read: "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel? says the Lord. Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Capthor and the Syrians from Kir?" That is to say, "Yes, of course, I brought the Israelites out of Egypt, but this is not a reason for complacency: I also brought the Philistines, our traditional enemy, from the western islands, and the Syrians, our current enemy, from the desert: I have been in the moving business for a long time, and you are really no different in my eyes than are the Ethiopians far beyond the horizon to the south." Amos gives no cause for comfort to those Israelites who sat back to anticipate the joy of God's rewards:

> Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! Why would you have the day of the Lord? It is darkness, and not light; as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house and leaned with his hand against the wall, and a serpent bit him. Is not the day of the Lord darkness, and not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? (5:18-20).

And by the time Jeremiah came along, at the end of the seventh century B.C., the political future was dark indeed: Babylonia was just about to take over, and Jeremiah felt called to the insane task of telling his fellow-Jews to *welcome* the Babylonians as the agents of God's punishment on his own people. He felt, when the destruction finally did come, that it meant the end of the covenant with God: the covenant was a failure, he thought; the people had done nothing but break the contract with God by their worship of fertility gods and by the injustices to each other, and therefore this destruction, which God intended, signaled the end: really the end: this is it; but, since God is faithful to his promises, he would draw up a new contract, a new covenant, without the loopholes of the old, a contract which

Israel would not be able to break as she had broken the old one:

> Behold, the days are coming...when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel... I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (31:31, 33).

(We note, in passing, that the Christian claim is that this replacement of the old contract by a new one has really been accomplished by God, in the event of Jesus Christ, and that the new $Israel_1$-prime, I suppose we should have to call it? — is, in fact the Christian church: but of this, more later.)

A new contract! — the old one had defects — the whole idea was terribly threatening to the Jews in their exile, never mentioned again in the Old Testament, except to be undercut, steadily, by later poets who insisted on the permanence of the original covenant: *The word of our God stands forever*, we read in Isaiah 40:8.

I want to pursue further the Old Testament understanding of the way $Israel_1$ was to be organized, but first let me try to summarize what we have learned so far about the claims of $Israel_1$ about herself. There seem to be two moods within the Old Testament about the matters that concern us here: the first, which I have called "afflict the comfortable," which suggests that God is a free-lance deity, that what he does and what he wills is constantly unexpected and not always reassuring: that if he has called $Israel_1$ to a special task, it is a harder task than other nations have, and for this task she will be held responsible; that if the land is to be under the control of $Israel_1$, it is because she is to be a steward, a trustee, of that land — it is not for her to use in any old way she wishes; indeed, some of the expressions of this mood are so wild that the astonishing thing is that they were preserved by later generations at all. And then the other mood is a more conventional and expected one: I have called it "comfort the afflicted" — we see it in pre-exilic times, in expressions of flattery of Israel's king and in dreams of military glory, but we see it particularly in post-exilic times, when there seemed so little to point to, in current events, that squared with the expectations of the covenant people, so that a marvelous rosy future was set forth, programmatically, as part of the assured will of God of his people.

But: and perhaps this is the most important thing I can say this evening — *both* these moods are to be seen as reactions to a *sovereign God of judgment and of grace*. It may be that the pre-exilic afflict-the-

comfortable kind of people were more conscious of the *judgment* of God: why shouldn't they be? — the nation was prosperous then, and needed to be reminded of its responsibilities; and it may be that the post-exilic comfort-the-afflicted kind of people were more conscious of the grace of God, who works far past what the nation may deserve. But the Old Testament *always* understands judgment and grace as twins, and as twin attributes of the living God. They belong together, and God offers both. The rescue from Egypt was grace, evidence of the love of God; the giving of the land was grace; the exile to Babylon was judgment; the rescue from Babylon was grace. Always it is the same God at work: and *never* was a political program sovereign: it is God who is sovereign, not a political program, and he always stands as Lord and judge over every political arrangement. As the book of Deuteronomy says it:

> Take heed lest you forget the Lord your God...lest, when you have eaten and are full, and have built goodly houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks multiply...then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth; that he may confirm his covenant which he swore to your fathers. (8:11-14, 17-18).

Yet, if God is understood as the Lord of history who has covenanted with a people, this people must have some kind of political order: we have already examined the debate within the Old Testament as to whether kingship was a good thing or a bad thing; now let me turn to a more general form of the same question, which arose when kingship was wiped out at the beginning of the sixth century B.C.: Does the people of God require a government and borders, and an army? — political integrity, in short? The question, of course, was forced upon them by the exile in Babylon, and it continued to agitate the Jews through the rest of the Old Testament period, through the Maccabean times, through the time of the wars with Rome, and, of course, down to the present day.

Now there was no real choice open to the Jews during the Babylonian, the Persian, the Greek periods: they had to make do with existing as a peculiar population in a particular province of a heathen empire. But the strange thing is, they discovered they could maintain

their covenantal integrity in this new way, without *political* integrity, more or less indefinitely. Prof. Faris mentioned Ezra, chapters 9-10, in his lecture here, as a charter for racial exclusivism, and so it is. But we must see it in its context, as part of the growing pains of learning how to be this new sort of community, this community-with-covenantal-integrity-but-without-political-integrity. They found they could be, by rallying around the rebuilt Temple and its cult, by instructing each other in the Law, by keeping the Sabbath. And Ezra was rightly concerned that this covenantal integrity not be lost by mixed marriages. We may regret his methods, but we must understand that he was faced with an absolutely new set of historical demands, and that this was his response.

And we must not forget, either, an anti-Ezra pamphlet which was being circulated in that day — I mean that wildly funny little book, the book of Jonah. — I do not say "wildly funny" because of the episode with Jonah and the great fish — that is not my immediate concern at all. My concern is what the book as a whole is about — a parable of a prophet called by God to preach to the king of *Assyria* — Assyria, the terrible military machine that had swallowed up the northern kingdom, that kept the southern kingdom in puppet status for decades — this prophet was called by God to preach repentance to the King of Assyria — like asking Genghis Khan please to repent, or — shall I be topical? — it's like asking an Arab Christian to walk south to ask repentance of Moshe Dayan. This little pamphlet suggests that the best way to be a covenant community is not to lock our doors and keep the good news of the God of the covenant to ourselves, but to throw open our doors to the world, even to Assyria. And if we are to be fair to the Old Testament in the post-exilic crisis of the very existence of $Israel_1$, we had better take a good look at the book of Jonah as well as to Ezra 9-10.

Does Israel need political integrity? — the question of course became a live issue again in the Maccabean period, in the second century B.C. The Jewish community divided quite severely into three groups: the Hellenizers — the young men who liked Greek civilization, and Greek ideas, and Greek athletic events; the political patriots like Judas Maccabeus, who felt there was no future for the Jewish community without political freedom, and that God helps them who help themselves; and the Hasidim, the "Pious Ones," who were not interested in political questions at all, feeling that God would solve the political problem if the Jew were faithful to his religious obligations.

Again, later on in Jesus' day, we see the same sectarian divisions; there were the Sadducees, who were content to let Rome rule so long as they could keep their own privileges; the Zealots, who wanted to start a revolt against Rome; and the Pharisees, who felt content to suffer, knowing that God would rescue them if they remained faithful to him. And each of these groups found substance for its position in material from the Old Testament.

Now, if we have not surveyed Old Testament theology in its entirety, we have at least demonstrated the variety of conviction within the Old Testament, the varied voices that speak of how history shows the work of God, and how Israel_1 is to respond within history to this work of God.

III

We come now to the last kind of question we have set for ourselves this evening: granted the kind of claim Israel_1 makes about herself, this claim may be only a historical curiosity now, only an interesting event in the religious history of the past: granted this claim, has it any value today? Does this Old Testament material have any relevance to the policy of Israel_2, or to us?

Now this is a new kind of question for us this evening. Up to now we have been dealing with questions of history, which are open to historical validation. We dealt with the turn of political events in ancient times, and we can verify these events with historical tools. We dealt with the religious claims of Israel_1, and we can verify these claims by reference to the Old Testament. But now we are raising the question of religious truth, a question of value and such a question cannot be answered in the same kind of way. Specifically, I cannot prove or disprove the existence of the God of the Old Testament to everyone's satisfaction. But still, we must try to find out whether the Old Testament can be used today, and if so, how: and so, to get at this set of problems, which are both descriptive (how do people use the Old Testament today?) and normative (how *should* people use the Old Testament today?), I shall offer a simple proposition, and then expand on it, and that is this: Some communities today do not use the Old Testament at all; other communities do use the Old Testament, and use it in a variety of ways, but some of these uses are responsible ones, while some are not.

First, obviously, some communities do not use the Old Testament

at all; specifically for us here tonight, Muslims and secular non-Zionists. To the Muslim, the Old Testament is misleading, and any claim based on it, whether by the Zionist or anyone else, is irrelevant. If one believes that God spoke through the Jewish scriptures, but only incompletely, and if one believes, further, that these scriptures have been tampered with in later times, then any argumentation based on the Old Testament is surely a snare and a delusion; and the Muslim is baffled by a religious claim which is tied up so closely to a given piece of land.

And, by the same token, the secular non-Zionist, who acknowledges no transcendent God, remains unmoved by the theocentricity of the Old Testament, and is irritated by those who seem to be dragging God into the argument. The secular non-Zionist assumes that the problem of Palestine is essentially a political one, and he sees no way to deal with an opponent who uses argumentation based upon a religious claim.

But, just as obviously, both Jews and Christians acknowledge the authority of the Old Testament. Each of these communities represents a pattern of interpretation of the Old Testament which meets its own needs of witness; and the contrast between these two communities is at least partly encouraged by the variety of voices within the Old Testament itself, a variety which leads to varying understandings of the ultimate "meaning" of the Old Testament. For example, the Christian, as we have suggested, agrees with Jeremiah that the old covenant was a failure, and that God not only promised a new covenant, but has actually contracted one, in Jesus Christ; the Jew, on the other hand, sees no reason to follow Jeremiah literally here, but agrees instead with Isaiah 40 that "the word of our God stands forever." The Christian sees the whole nature of the covenant-relation between God and his people as having been radically transposed, so that the Law, as the Jews have understood it, is seen to have been at best a temporary makeshift, and at worst a delusion. The Christian sees membership in the covenant-people to be open to anyone, of any tribe or nation, who acknowledges God's invitation to be adopted into membership. The Christian, if asked whether the people of God need borders, and army, and government, would answer "no," that this is the responsibility of the state, not the church — though there have been some alarmingly intimate relations between state and church in the course of Christian history; while when the Jew is asked the question, then he is not so sure of the answer. I repeat, both the

Jew and the Christian are able to establish their respective religious affirmations out of a selective reading of the Old Testament, which, as we have seen, is ideal for selective reading.

But, just as surely as Christians and Jews diverge from each other in their use and understanding of the Old Testament, so each community is also divided within itself as to a proper understanding of the meaning of the Old Testament. One can imagine the debates for the past twenty centuries within the Jewish community over such questions, and the debates within the Christian community as well: but we must confine ourselves now simply to the current scene. Let me begin with the Jews, and deal first with the Zionist Jew.

Zionism is a political program which has made an appeal to every group of Jews, whatever their religious outlook or lack thereof. Zionism points to the steady persecution and discrimination against Jews in whatever country; points to the attachment of the Jews to the land of Palestine from as early a time as Jews were conscious of their distinctiveness; appeals to the steady longing of the Jews for a return to this land, a longing reflected in the post-exilic prophets and seers and reflected in the drinking toast which was offered every year on the eve of Passover for the past two thousand years, "Next year in Jerusalem." This Zionist appeal is not *based* upon specific biblical interpretation, but simply *assumes* a biblical interpretation: it appeals to sentiment, to ethnic solidarity, to the yearning of the Jew for a place to call home where he need not apologize for being Jewish. One could easily raise the question as to whether Judaism, as a religion taken historically in its own categories, is not being hopelessly distorted by being forced into the mould of a specific political program. Granted; but what we simply affirm now is that Zionism uses the Old Testament only incidentally: Zionism appeals rather to Jewish ethnic solidarity and to the deep existential fear of genocide. But we can go on to say this: Zionism does not want to *listen* to the Old Testament, does not want to grasp the nature of the debates carried on within its pages — because it does not want to be subject to the God of judgment and grace there revealed. No, if the Old Testament speaks of an eschatological return of God's people to the land, it will be because God has done it; but Zionism tries to force God's hand.

Let me be quite specific, and deal now with Israel_2. Israel_2 as a *political entity* does not acknowledge the God of judgment and of grace. Obviously not. Israel_2 has gained her victories by her own

hand and strong right arm; she does what she does out of her own conception of military necessity and of political self-interest, but without any sense of the judgment and grace of God: her victories are not understood as God's grace to her, past her deserving, nor does $Israel_2$, as a state, have any awareness that her victories stand under the judgment of God. $Israel_2$ conducts herself as any other nation-state does, with self-interest uppermost. Indeed (and this is the irony) $Israel_2$ is no more capable of repentance now than Isaiah or Jeremiah found $Israel_1$ to be in their day. The present Israeli government maintains a great deal of interest in biblical geography and biblical history, but no interest in the God who can be met within the pages of the Old Testament. Therefore, I say, for $Israel_2$ to use the Old Testament as she has done, is to *misuse* the Old Testament, because the witness of $Israel_1$ in the Old Testament is a witness to a God of judgment and of grace.

Therefore, theologically, $Israel_2$ is *not* $Israel_1$. There may be cultural continuity between the ancient nation and the modern nation; there may be sociological or ethnic continuity, but not theological continuity. This is why it is necessary to distinguish between the two. This is why, when a Christian reads the Old Testament, he is *not* reading about $Israel_2$; but of this, more in a moment.

First, though, we should have a look at some selected groups within the Israeli population — because the policies of a government may not reflect the belief and outlook of some specific segments of its population. Therefore, let us look at $Israeli_2a$, $_2b$, $_2c$, and $_2d$. $Israeli_2a$ is an avowed secularist, and he forms about 90% of the Jewish population of the nation: and when we ask what he does with the Old Testament, the answer is that he does with it what his government does — he sees in the Old Testament nationalistic lore from the past. $Israeli_2a$ is an enthusiastic archeologist. But does he have any ethical uneasiness about the policies of his government? From all reports, he does not. In short, the dimension of God's judgment and grace, about which we have been speaking, is absent from his thinking altogether.

$Israeli_2b$ is an orthodox Jew, and he forms about 10% of the Jewish population of the nation. He keeps the traditional Jewish law set forth in the Talmud, which, itself, ultimately, is commentary on the Law found in the Old Testament. Thus $Israeli_2b$ believes himself to be utterly faithful to the Old Testament and to the God revealed therein; but he is so concerned with how the state should

legislate such matters as pig-farming and open cinemas on the Sabbath that he has no mental equipment left for asking how the military policy of the state, the international policies of the state, should come under the scrutiny of God; for the Talmud does not legislate these matters. As a result, then, however faithful $Israeli_2b$ may be to the provisions of the Old Testament against eating pork or breaking the Sabbath, he is wildly irrelevant to the kind of political questions about which the pre-exilic prophets were concerned, and he is content to let the government make the decisions.

$Israeli_2c$ is probably a representative of a very small group of people: he is a follower of Martin Buber, who died, alas, in 1965, a man deeply sensitive to the God of the Old Testament, who knew well the meaning of God's scrutiny on all aspects of life. Buber founded a movement many years ago called *Ihud* ("Union"), for genuine unity, mutual concern, and common cause between Jews and Arabs. He wrote to Gandhi in 1939, "We have no desire to dispossess them (the Arabs): we want to live with them. We do not want to dominate them, we want to serve with them." (Quoted in *Israel and the World*, Schocken Books, p. 233.) In referring to the Deir Yasin massacre, he wrote, "I cannot think about this without feeling myself guilty. Our fighting faith in the spirit was too weak, to prevent the outbreak and spread of false demonic teaching." (*Ibid.*, p. 257) I say, there must be men like him today living across the border; I have heard, for example, of the ethical concern of the Reform rabbi of West Jerusalem. We must not forget the existence of such men, men who know that the measure of righteousness in the Old Testament was never how one looks after his kinsmen alone, but how one looks after the widow, and the orphan, and the stranger within one's gates.

$Israeli_2d$ we ought to mention too: he is a member of the Mapam party (the left-wing Socialist). These folk maintain kibbutzim, and I am told by a Christian friend who studied in Israel for a year that the Mapam-kibbutzniks are the *only group* he found in Israel who were seriously concerned about sound relations between Jews and Arabs, relations not poisoned by prejudice and paternalism. Fine: God does not need a man to *acknowledge* him in order to do his will; if Karl Marx leads one to do God's will, this does not bother God at all. Let us not forget, then, these saving remnants within $Israel_2$.

One could report similar distinctions among Jews living in the West, outside Israel. Many Jews in the West, like most in the state of Israel, are quite secularist, and, even if he is not actively Zionist,

the Western Jew supports the state of Israel simply because the Israelis are his kinsfolk. And I do not think there is much we Christians can do to change his mind. Curiously, I have the feeling that the Jew in the United States will be the last to learn what is really going on in the Near East; susceptible to sentimental propaganda, open to an appeal based upon his fears for his kin, or based upon his sense of guilt for his relatively easy life, he is a Zionist or a fellow-traveller of Zionism. We may regret that he feels this way; we may show very little sympathy for his feeling, but this is the way he is.

But we should also be aware of many voices, some of them quite lonely, within the Jewish communities of the West, which speak out against the policies of $Israel_2$. Some of us know of Rabbi Elmer Berger's group in the United States, the American Council for Judaism, which insists that Judaism is a religion, that the American Jew must not have a double loyalty, to two states, but must be an American whose religion is Jewish. (You may have seen his article, called "Israel: the Fulfillment of Biblical Prophecy?"). [1]

One finds other unexpected voices being raised in the United States. In a "New Left" student paper published in San Francisco, called "The Movement," in the issue for last November, I found the following: "As a Jew deeply bound to his people and to their traditions I do not believe Israel has a right to exist at the expense of one and a half million Arabs. If it could not be done except at that price I would rather it not be done. Because that price is changing the Jews of Israel. They are proud of their militarism, discriminatory against the darker-skinned, racist toward the Arabs in their land and out..." (pp. 2, 14). Again, not all these voices are religiously oriented, but they serve God's purposes.

I think by now you can sense that I feel there is a saving remnant among the Jews of our time, both in Israel and in the West, that use the Old Testament responsibly. There are Christians, I know, that assume by definition that *no* Jew can use the Old Testament responsibly, simply because no Jew acknowledges Jesus as Messiah. I cannot bring myself to feel that this kind of *a priori* reaction of Christians is helpful when discussing Zionism. If a Jew shows himself responsive to the God of judgment and grace, then I, for one, praise the Lord and am grateful for his response.

Now let us turn to the use Christians make of the Old Testament,

[1] Reprinted in this volume, pp 9-14.-Ed.

particularly when faced with the issue of Zionism. First of all, let me pick up an observation I have already made. We who are Christian must take seriously the New Testament affirmation that it is the church, we ourselves, who are the true Israel — Israel-prime, as I whimsically called us. But if my code numbers this evening are whimsical, the identification is not. It is the identification the New Testament itself makes. Paul, at the end of his letter to the Galatian church, writes, "Circumcision is nothing; uncircumcision is nothing; the only thing that counts is new creation! Whoever they are who take this principle for their guide, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God." (6:15-16 NEB) There you have it: what matters is not whether you are a Jew or a non-Jew, but the way in which God has reconstituted the whole nature of the covenant people, and we are it, the Israel of God. We have said that $Israel_2$ is not in theological continuity with $Israel_1$. Now we must affirm that $Israel_1$-prime, the church, is in continuity with $Israel_1$ in the sense that we are the community charged to continue to be attentive to the voice of the God of judgment and grace who can be met in the Old Testament.

Now how has this worked out in practice? Well of course there are a large number of Christians everywhere who, as we have suggested, reject this New Testament teaching, and simply ignore the Old Testament, but I hope I have made it clear that I consider this escapism to be theologically wrong and a rejection of our calling.

Then there are a great number of Christians, alas, particularly conservative Christians in Western Europe and the United States — but they are to be found in Arab churches here as well — who see the Old Testament as quite relevant to present events because they are convinced that present events are a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. These "Christian Zionists," if I may so call them, are the victims, I submit, of a false understanding of the Old Testament, and I do not need to go over the argumentation again: the pictures in the Old Testament of the return of the Jews to Palestine are a part of an eschatology, of God's final acts beyond history, not of the acts of men within history; and as the years pass, and as these events are seen to be, not a part of the end-time, but to be simply one more evidence of man's inhumanity to man, then I trust this misreading of the Old Testament will fade away. But at the moment it is a very popular point of view, I fear. I was appalled to find, last October, in an Armenian Protestant church in Los Angeles, many of whose

members know the Near East well, a pile of pamphlets on the literature rack which explained how the events of last June were foretold in the Bible, and I am afraid the pastor was too naive theologically to see how wrong these pamphlets were.

And though the Jewish Zionists do not depend much on the Old Testament for their argumentation, they are quite glad for the support of Christians who do; and they cultivate that support. Thus there is, in West Jerusalem, a "Near Eastern School of Archeology," (no relation to my own school here, I hasten to say!), which cultivates Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land and which shows how the modern state lives up to the old prophecies.

But there are other Christians, not only in the West, but in the Near East as well, who understand the Old Testament as I have presented it here this evening, who see Zionism as a rebirth of the spirit *against* which Amos and Jeremiah and others were fighting, and who cry out against it in the name of the God whom they have learned to know within the pages of the Old Testament as well as of the New.

Now I cannot leave this survey without some specific reference to what is perhaps the most nagging question of all in the matter of the Old Testament and Zionism, the most nagging question for both Jews and Christians sensitive to ethical issues, and that is the matter of the way in which the Old Testament describes the Israelite conquest of Palestine in the 13th, 12th, and 11th centuries B.C. The impression we get is that the Israelites were commanded by God to kill every Canaanite, man, woman, and child, even their animals. There is, for example, Deut. 20:16-18:

> But in the cities of these people that the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall utterly destroy them...as the Lord your God has commanded; that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices which they have done in the service of their gods, and so to sin against the Lord your God.

With such a charter for slaughter, we ask, how can we take the Old Testament out of the hands of the Zionists?

Let me say two things. First, theologically the idea is that the Israelites should not take any personal *gain* from the land, no silver or gold, no animals, no slaves, because the land belongs to God; and furthermore they must not in any way have *contact* with the terrible

pagan fertility practices of the local inhabitants. Therefore kill them all. But we have already noted, in passing, at the beginning of this hour, that the Israelites did *not*, as a matter of historical fact, consistently wipe out their Canaanite neighbors — the idea of a "holy war" was never consistently carried through. And this brings me to my second point. There is no substitute, when dealing with biblical material, for our constantly asking ourselves, when was this particular passage written, and why? And in the case of these passages about "destroy all the inhabitants," they were committed to writing not at the time of the conquest at all, but much later, at the end of the seventh century B.C., when the southern kingdom was fighting for its life against Assyria and Babylonia; and it was not an appeal to wipe out the Canaanites in the seventh century B.C. — there were no pure-bred Canaanites then; it was an appeal to wipe out Canaanite *religious* practices, the fertility-cult practices in vogue among the Israelites at that time. It was a sermonic appeal (an idealized appeal, if you will!), saying, God commanded our ancestors, through Moses and Joshua, to wipe out the Canaanites with their filthy religion. Now, what about you: are you on God's side or against him? Far from being a charter for slaughter, then, these passages are really an appeal for religious purity: not to our taste, no doubt, but we should see them for what they are, within the circumstances of their original purpose.

Israel was trying through the Old Testament to be sensitive to the God of history. From the Christian perspective, she was defective in understanding God's will at a number of points. She assumed without question that God's covenant was permanently with a particular tribal group, while Christians see God's purposes working through that tribal group to his adopted children everywhere, Israel assumed too easily that evil is to be located "out there," among "those other people" — Canaanites, Amalekites, and all those other "—ites," instead of "in here," although the prophets steadily turned the searchlight of God's judgment in upon their own people. Israel assumed without much question that the people of God needed a particular land, permanently. Perhaps God's great experiment of covenanting with men could never have been launched without tribalism, and borders, and an army, and even kingship. But Christians are convinced that the need for a land as a laboratory for the covenant people was only a temporary necessity, and that finally God's people has outgrown this need.

But, as I have said again and again this evening, the main question

the biblically oriented person must ask the Zionist is this: what do you do with the God of $Israel_1$? How do you stand with him?

As you know, the hippies in the United States like to wear buttons with slogans on them. Here is one I bought in the hippie neighbourhood of San Francisco: "God was abducted by Israeli agents." Now we know where God has been — why he has been given up for dead! ...But, beyond the God-is-dead problem, this button dramatizes for all to see exactly what has happened: for the modern state of Israel has tried to lock up God, to make him dance to a political program. And this he will not allow them to do.

But what of us? Let us also take care. If God is not to be domesticated to a Zionist political program, then we should be careful that we not try to domesticate him to *our* political program either. For he will judge us as he judges all those who call upon his name.

The first great theologian of international relations was Isaiah, in the eighth century B.C. In an unforgettable passage in the 10th chapter of the book of Isaiah, he stuns the southern kingdom by saying, "*Oh Assyria, the rod of my anger... against a godless nation I send him...*" (*verses 5-6*) – that is, I, God, am sending that terrible nation Assyria against my own beloved people, whom I am calling godless. But Isaiah does not let us assume that God is permanently pro-Assyria and anti-Israel. In the 12th verse we read, "*When the Lord has finished all his work in Jerusalem he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride.*" First God uses Assyria against Israel. Then God turns against Assyria. God uses political programs, but he is not bound by them. And if the folk to the south of us cannot domesticate him, then we must not try to do so either.

6

"THE ISRAEL OF GOD" AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

DR. FRANK STAGG

WHEN IN 1948 the United Nations created the modern state called Israel, the age-old question of the place of the Jew in the purpose of God gained new importance for much of the world. Many Christians, especially certain ones in the United States of America, have seen in this political state one step toward the fulfillment of God's work of redemption. These see Israel as the people of God. Others, Christian and non-Christian, strongly reject this interpretation, seeing in it a sanction for the action of the United Nations with its far-reaching effects for both Jews and non-Jews. The Jews themselves are not in agreement as to the significance of the state of Israel. Many Jews protest the idea of being a "chosen" race, having seen the strong resentments this idea has awakened in others.

The purpose of this paper is a limited one. It is concerned with what the New Testament means by the "Israel of God." The answer to this question may have far-reaching implications, for Christians at least, as to the meaning of the political state of Israel. The paper is not concerned with the action of the United Nations nor with the future of the nation Israel. This writer does not purpose to champion the partisan interests of any group. His conviction is that the true people of God include or should include persons from all nations and races. As a Christian he understands the New Testament to set forth as God's purpose the creation of a fellowship of persons in Christ transcending all distinctions of nationality and race.

The Israel of God

The people of God described in the New Testament as the church (ecclesia), the body of Christ, the Israel of God, or subjects under the kingdom (sovereignty) of God, and by various other terms, transcend all national and racial categories. The people of God as described in the New Testament are not to be identified with any existing or future political state. The New Testament recognizes the importance of ordered societies and hence of political states, but never does it confuse the kingdom of God or the church with a nation or race of people. Reference to the people of God as the Israel of God is only an apparent exception, for in the New Testament the "Israel of God" is made up of Jews and Gentiles wherever and whenever they may live.

The Bible is basically the story of what God has done and is doing for man's salvation. Since men are persons and persons are brought to their true being only in relation to persons, it is not surprising to see in both Old and New Testaments the purpose of God to create a redeemed people. The Old Testament is built around God's calling of Israel. In the New Testament major attention is given to the creation of a new community variously termed the church, the body of Christ, or the Israel of God.

Jesus and the Church

The New Testament is primarily concerned with Christ and his people. Jesus called people to himself, not just to a certain doctrine or practice. He formed a group of disciples about himself, and soon he made known his purpose to build his church (ecclesia), an indestructible fellowship of persons under the sovereignty of God.

From the four gospels it may be seen that Jesus found it necessary to resist false ideas about the work of Messiah and to correct his hearers at many points. Many looked for Messiah as one who would "redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). Even the disciples closest to Jesus entertained this idea, and after his resurrection they asked him if he at this time was to "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6). They obviously thought that the kingdom of God would emerge in terms of Israel's emancipation from Roman rule and her restoration to her former position among the nations. Jesus rejected this attempt to identify the kingdom with national Israel. He refused to be a Zealot leader, concerned with a political state. In fact, he did not identify himself

with the special interests of any party of the Jews: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, or other known party.

Jesus himself struck the death blow at artificial and superficial criteria for determining the people of God. He rejected the false distinction made by the Pharisees of his day between the "righteous" and the "sinners." He classed all men as sinners and called all men to the same repentance and faith (Mark 2:17). The Pharisees opposed him chiefly because of his rejection of their distinctions between "clean" and "unclean," between the "righteous" and the "sinners."

The Apostle Paul

Paul is explicit in identifying the true Israel of God. He clearly distinguishes between national Israel and the true Israel of God, between Israel according to the flesh and spiritual Israel. In Galatians 6:15 he wrote: "Neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation." That is, the true people of God are not determined by circumcision or uncircumcision any more than by any physical condition or act. They are a special creation of God. In the next verse, Paul alludes to the people who are this new creation as "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16). In First Corinthians 10:18 he referred to "the Israel according to the flesh," alluding to natural or national Israel as distinguished from the true Israel of God. In Romans 9:6, Paul declared that "not all out of Israel are themselves Israel." The context leaves no doubt that he is distinguishing between those of natural Israel and those who are of Christ. In Romans 2-28f. Paul distinguishes between the outward Jew and the inward Jew.

> For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit not in the letter; whose praise is not of men but of God. (American Standard Version).

Galatians 3:26-29 is equally clear:

> For all ye are sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ. For whatsoever ones of you who were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor freedman, neither male nor female; for all ye are one in Christ Jesus. If ye are of Christ, indeed ye are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise.

One of the most forceful of the New Testament portrayals of the people of God is found in the epistle to the Ephesians. This epistle is concerned with God's eternal purpose to create in Christ a new fellowship of persons, the church, the body of Christ. This new fellowship transcends the superficial distinctions of nationality and race and constitutes "a new man" (2:15), neither Jew nor Gentile. This is the true Israel of God, made up of people circumcised and uncircumcised, Jews and Gentiles.

Paul is concerned to show how God has broken down the middle wall of partition (Ephesians 2:14) which had separated the "Circumcision" from the "Uncircumcision" (Ephesians 2:11). Through the "Cross" Christ purposes to create in himself of the two (Jew and Gentile) one new man, thus making peace (Ephesians 2:15f.). This church (ecclesia) of God or body of Christ is thus the new or true Israel of God, transcending the old distinctions of nationality or race. The true Israel consists of all the people of Christ.

The Early Christians

The book of Acts traces much of the development of the Christian community through the early decades of its existence, and in this book it is made clear that the bitterest struggle was not over the person of Christ but over the inclusion of Gentiles with Jews in the fellowship of the church.* It was not the preaching that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, that ultimately forced the Christian community out of the Jewish synagogue; it was rather the position that uncircumcised Gentiles were to be included in the church. In other words, it was the struggle between two concepts: Israel according to the flesh and the true Israel of God.

The earliest Christians were Jews as was Jesus himself. The Old Testament was the Bible of Jesus and the earliest Christians. Jesus and the earliest Christians worshipped in the synagogues and at the temple in Jerusalem. For some decades thousands of Jews were followers of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. At the time of Paul's last recorded visit to Jerusalem, he was told that there were myriads (tens of thousands) of Jews who had believed, all zealous for the law (Acts 21:20). By the end of the first century of the Christian era,

* Cf. Frank Stagg, *The Book of Acts; the Early Struggle for an Unhindered Gospel.* (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1955.)

however, it seems that the Christian community was almost entirely Gentile. When the Gospel of John was written, the author, himself probably a Jewish Christian, referred to "the Jews" as though they were a group clearly distinct from the Christians. It seems that within the first half-century of its history, the Christian community changed from a Jewish to a Gentile constituency. Why? Over what issue? *The book of Acts plainly indicates that the change represented the unwillingness of the Jew to continue in a fellowship in which "the Israel of God" included Gentiles as well as Jews.*

The book of Acts shows how the intention of God to save all who would believe and thus to create a new fellowship of people in Christ came gradually to be understood by some of the disciples. Philip and Stephen seem to have pioneered in the preaching of a gospel unhindered by limitations of nationality and race. Saul of Tarsus bitterly opposed this and then, following his conversion, became the chief exponent of the gospel designed for all men and a fellowship inclusive of all who would believe.

In brief, Acts shows the triumph of a gospel unhindered. It also traces out the tragedy of the self-exclusion from the Christian community of the very people from whom it had its rise. Thousands of Jews were able to follow Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, their savior and Lord. But to surrender their nationalistic claims and lose themselves in a fellowship that transcended these lines was the rock over which they ultimately stumbled. The tragedy of this is heightened by the fact that this very fellowship of persons was first championed by men of Israel, the prophets of the Old Testament. It must be remembered that in the New Testament the great champions of a universal fellowship transcending all narrow particularism of nationality and race were Jews: Jesus, Philip, Stephen, Paul, and others! The great voices of Israel herself cry out against confusing the people of God with any nation or race.

Conclusion

This generation has seen the creation of the modern state of Israel. It is not the purpose of this paper in any way to contest or concede the validity, the rightness, or importance of this development. The state of Israel today is a nation among nations, and it must as a political state pursue its destiny as any other political state. It must be judged

as any other political state. But to identify modern Israel, the state or the Jewish people, with the "Israel of God" is to miss the teaching of the New Testament at one of its most vital points.

PART II

CHRISTIANS AND THE PALESTINE PROBLEM TODAY

7

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH CONCERNING THE PALESTINE PROBLEM

*A memorandum by a group of Middle Eastern Theologians**

RECENT EVENTS IN PALESTINE make an urgent call to the Faithful of all Churches to awaken their conscience to the requirements demanded of Christians by the Palestinian problem.

Diverse kinds of propaganda have sown confusion and the attitude of Christians in the present situation has not always been inspired by the spirit of Christ.

The following remarks are meant solely for Christians in order that they may be helped in the light of the gospel of Christ to make a clear judgement on the three following questions:

1. The facts leading to the present situation.
2. What is revealed in the Bible concerning the confusion between the ideals of Judaism and Zionism.
3. Some ideas on a just solution to the Palestinian problem.

I. *The facts leading up to the present situation*

1. After the year 70 AD, some Jewish communities continued to live in Palestine. Apart from the revolt of 135, their presence there has never presented any problem. But religious Jews scatter-

* The authors of the Memorandum are: Fr. Jean Corbon, Fr. Georges Khodr, Rev. Samir Kafeety, Maître Albert Laham.

ed throughout the entire world have always been filled with the longing to "return" and the desire to restore the Third Temple. This is worthy of respect in the name of freedom of the spirit, but transform a religious aspiration into a political claim and it becomes ambiguous. The Christian kingdoms of Palestine during the Crusades were pervaded by this same sense of ambiguity. The summons to religious war has no basis in the gospel and it directly contradicts today's understanding of the rights of man.

2. Except for the persecutions in the Hejaz during the 7th century, the Arabic world of the Near East has never known anti-semitism. On the contrary, violent anti-semitism has been, since the Middle Ages, a fact in the Christian kingdoms and empires of Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic.
   Christians in these countries must first of all recognize that their unfaithfulness to the gospel has been one of the major determining factors in the modern Zionist Movement and must, therefore, search now for a solution to this instead of allowing the whole weight to hang on the innocent population of Palestine.
3. Profiting from the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Zionist colonies started to establish themselves in Palestine. Political ambitions had already started to creep into the religious aspirations. Even so, these settlers were accorded the same welcome as all the other religious communities, Muslims, Christians and Druzes that had found refuge in the Near East throughout the centuries.
4. The Balfour Declaration of 1917 with its promise of the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine coincided with the development of oil interests and strategies of the great monetary powers in the Near East.
   The Declaration did not spring from any religious basis. This only suggested itself to the Christian conscience to justify the existence of a Jewish State.
5. European anti-semitism attained its hysterical climax in the days of Nazi persecution. After the 2nd World War, with the countries of Europe suffering from a guilty conscience, the Jewish communities of the Eastern and central states should have been reintegrated with full civil rights as were other non-Jewish families who had been victims of the Nazis as well. But these states refused to carry out this act of justice.
   In their desire to erase this Nazi wrong, they met injustice with

injustice. Because the Christians of Europe and America denied their responsibility for a million Jews who were their brothers, they threw one million Arabs out of their homeland of Palestine. "What have you done to your brother?" In rejecting one million Jews and in despoiling one million Arabs, the Christians of the West have committed a double crime which cries to heaven for redress.

6. The creation of the state of Israel would not have been possible without the connivance of the economic and military interests of the great powers. Christian conscience cannot hide its true motives in humanitarian and religious principles without adding hypocrisy and yet another act of irresponsibility to its two-fold crime.
7. In the London Conference of 1946-47, the Arab offer of a democratic state in Palestine, with Jewish representation in government proportionate to the existing Jewish population and full guarantees of Jewish civil rights, was rejected by the Zionists. One of the causes of the 1948 war was the refusal of the Zionists to accept this solution.*
8. After the 1948 Armistice and in defiance of a UN decision constantly repeated for twenty years, the Israelis refused to integrate a million Arab refugees into their newly established state. These were Christians and Muslims whom they had driven from their homes and their lands.

   This defiance, which still exists today, reveals a racist attitude which no human or Christian conscience can accept. As long as the Israelis want to found a state based on this kind of racism, it will continue to be the duty of all Christians to oppose it.
9. Western Christians still believe that they can salve their conscience in pitying the fate of the Israelis, in giving them arms and supplies: but History puts yet another question before them.

   Why are they so sympathetic towards the fate of the Jews they have driven from their countries, when they are never troubled by the fact that millions of Armenians and other Eastern Christians have been massacred and have had to leave their countries?
10. During the course of the last few weeks, the Palestinian drama has given birth to fresh violence. On the one hand there have

* This paragraph has been modified in the present edition of the Memorandum by its authors for greater clarification.

been threats of extermination and anti-semitic demonstrations in some countries and anti-Arab in others. There has been annexation of land belonging to sovereign states in war and the expulsion by terror of more than 300,000 Palestinian Arabs.

Christian conscience must condemn without reserve these violent actions, wherever they come from.

Firstly because their motive is not the defence of justice but racist-oriented desires of power.

Secondly because their result is an unlimited unleashing of racism. Anti-semitism has produced Zionism, Zionism has provoked a new wave of anti-semitism, which in itself strengthens the outlook of Zionism and so on and so on.

Thirdly because racism feeds itself on a lie on the one hand and on a mistake on the other—that is to say on the confusion between the well-being of the Jewish people and the interests of the state of Israel. As long as the truth does not shine through this confusion, there will be no end to the infernal circle of violence.

11. For at least 30 years, the Churches have issued various statements against anti-semitism. The Vatican Council has itself made a declaration about the facts as they are known. But these statements have always been exploited by the Israelis for political ends. Yet these declarations have a meaning which is explicitly religious and humanitarian. In no way do they signify the recognition of the State of Israel, but only the will of Christians to be faithful to the Gospel in their dealings with Jews.

The confusion between the Jewish people and the State of Israel, between Judaism and Zionism is the real core of the problem that the most recent events in Palestine have posed to the Christian conscience.

II. *What is revealed by the Bible concerning the confusion between Judaism and Zionism*

12. For Christians it is clearly stated according to the Bible, that the Jews are a people "chosen" by God. They were "chosen" by the living God in order to reveal his plan for the salvation of humanity in Christ. "Salvation comes from the Jews" (John 4, 22). The Jewish people have been called to live out in their own history, the history of the whole of humanity. A history in which God saves man. It is because of this that they are not people with

any temporal or political destiny but exist as an example to all of their heavenly destiny. They were chosen to reveal that humanity as a whole is not intended to succeed in "this world" but in the "world that is to come", the kingdom of heaven.

13. The promise made to Abraham is based on a posterity and on a land. If this posterity was to have been the Jewish race and the land to have been Palestine, this would have meant that God excluded all other races of the earth from the promise. Rather the blessing of the promise was destined to reach all humanity and all creation. This promise found its fulfillment in Christ. He is himself posterity. (Galatians 3 & 4). He sums up all humanity. As for the land, this is the kingdom of Heaven and it will be inherited through the Holy Spirit. (Beatitudes, Matthew 5). To understand the promise made to Abraham in the material sense is to pervert God's plan. It is only in the spiritual sense that this promise can be fulfilled, by Christ arisen (Acts. 13. 32). The posterity and the land are not to be sought by Man but given by God.
14. The Jewish race, an example for all humanity, is a consecrated people, a nation which is consecrated, a nation of priests. It belongs only to God and not to the earthly kingdom. To make of the Jewish race a nation like the others is the same as making the Church into a nation among others (this has been known in History), for Israel in the flesh is the symbol of the Church which is Israel according to the Holy Spirit.
15. The Jewish people is prophetic, not a nation but "a witness of God among the nations." By its election, it reveals that all men are beloved by God with a love that is elective. By its infidelity it reveals that Humanity is "locked in sin." Because God's love is stronger than its sin, it reveals that all humanity finds salvation through pure mercy. (Romans 11). Because God has given the World the Saviour and the Apostles, it is revealed that henceforth the Church gives salvation to the World through its apostolic ministry.
16. The Jewish race was chosen to serve the Salvation of Humanity and not to establish itself in any particular religious or racial way. In the same fashion, the Church is "called to serve the World and not to enfold itself in any particular cultural or religious shroud. Christians and indeed other religions very well know their own temptation by "Zionism." But the vocation of the

Jewish people is universalist, not particularist.

17. From the Christian point of view it is clear from this that the creation of an exclusively Jewish State of Israel goes directly against God's plan for the Jewish people and the World. Just as the creation of exclusively Christian states, in former times and to-day, was directly contrary to the calling of the Church and the salvation of the world.
18. The restoration of the kingdom of Israel (Acts, 1, 6-11) was still the dream of the Apostles before the Ascension. The arisen Lord showed them clearly that the restoration was from that time on the work of the Holy Spirit for the good of all nations. It was Paul's singular calling to bring the first Christian community to admit this. This is the message of which the Church is continuously reminded by the Holy Spirit and which we must witness especially to our brother Jews.
19. The despoiling of the Temple in the year 70 and the scattering of the Jewish people were given by Christ as a prophetic sign of the kingdom (Matthew 24). The end of the Jewish people as a political entity is a sign of the first coming of the Son of Man and the advent of the Kingdom. Just as the end of the earthly kingdoms will reveal the advent of the Son of Man and end of the World.
20. It is, therefore, a total misunderstanding of the story of salvation and a perversion of God's plan for a Christian to want to re-establish a Jewish nation as an exclusive political entity. It would imply the statement that humanity is not called to fulfill the kingdom of God, but merely an earthly destiny. Zionist messianism shows itself to be very much in tune with marxist messianism. It also represents a step back towards a medieval mentality where the state and religion were one. In this sense, a great many old religions and modern ideologies think in the same way. No Christian can be a party to this.

III. *Some thoughts on a fair solution of the Palestinian problem*

21. The Christian conscience should always discern what is the authentic vocation of the Jewish people and what is the other side of the coin, that is, the racist State of Israel. Only when this has been understood, will anti-semitism be avoided, anti-semitism which attacks God's plan of salvation and Zionism which changes the same plan of salvation into earthly messianism. The past has

revealed to us the long series of mistakes which this lack of discernment brings in its throes. Anti-semitism gives birth to Zionism and Zionism gives birth to racial injustice, nationalism and religious fanaticism. The legitimate inhabitants of Palestine are today the bloody witnesses to the face of humanity.

22. The solution to the fate of Palestine can be found first in the rest of the world when man's—and especially the Christian's—conscience is clear. Concerning the question which lies at the heart of the story of salvation it is imperative that all Christians turn to Christ: "there is no Jew, no Greek, no slave, no free man, no man, no woman, you are all one in Christ." The actual state of Israel is the most recent kind of racism, but the roots and the fruits of racism are still in abundance all over the world. If every nation accepts and integrates its Jewish citizens in the true freedom of the children of God, the Palestinian problem will already be partly resolved. For the Jewish race is by calling a universal race as Christians are really as well. This people is the mirror of humanity. Their temptations are ours; our victory against all discrimination will be therefore their own.
23. It is every Christian's duty to inquire objectively and then inform objectively on the true facts of the Palestinian problem, over and above all the lying propaganda, from wherever it comes. In this particular aspect, Christians must question themselves in a critical way and with the wisdom of the gospel behind them, about the success of certain Zionist propaganda throughout the world.
24. Strength is no basis for right. But the State of Israel is born out of violence, it has developed in violence and will continue to develop in violence: it is history's most recent example of a colonisation by force. The world's conscience opposes it in principle. Why then are Christians silent, when their mission is to serve Truth which liberates by peace?
25. This world-wide campaign for truth will be vital for the solution of the Palestinian problem. The Christian conscience must uncover the myths surrounding the religious and sentimental motives which hide the real financial powers in the racist and Zionist campaign. First it was a million refugees from Palestine, now hundreds of thousands more are thrown in misery, degradation and despair. "What have you done to your brother?"
26. The final point is that the only solution to the problem of Palestine

lies in the effective goodwill of a pluralism, ethnic, religious and social, of all the inhabitants of Palestine, Christians, Muslims and Jews. This is without paradox the true vocation of all humanity, of which the Jewish race reminds it: universalism. This universalism has a new name today: pluralism. Not the simple tolerance of minorities, as in the old medieval mentality of political religions, but the pluralism which creates a completely modern state. This will mean a true conversion for the modern state of Israel from racism to the universal vocation of the Jews that will make it:

- integrate all the refugees who have been thrown out of their homes,
- make reparation towards them as certain states have done towards the other Jews,
- accept that all the inhabitants of Palestine be considered as citizens with full rights in their own homeland,
- promote active participation in the political life of Palestine without any discrimination for all of the inhabitants,
- use all the available resources for the development of all the citizens and those of the neighbouring countries,
- respect the boundaries of the neighbouring countries,
- submit to all international decisions.

Thus can some of the elementary rules of the Sermon on the Mount have an up-to-date application. If all the Christians in the world will listen to them, and more, make them become international decisions, then the rules of the gospels will be answered, those same rules which the present fate of Palestine urgently brings to our mind.

Beirut, June 18, 1967.

8

CHRISTIANS AND THE MIDEAST CRISIS*

DR. WILLARD G. OXTOBY

WHEN IS ATTACK not aggression? When it is self-defense. And self-defense, it seems, has all along been the position of both Moshe Dayan and Gamal Abdel Nasser, of Israeli and Arab alike. Though the shooting has stopped (at least for the time being), the war of words goes on in the continuing story of the Middle East as it has done for decades. From the United Nations and diplomatic circles, from pulpits and editorial pages issue appeals to the principles of morality, decency and justice. Speaking individually or officially, people agree that self-defense is legitimate but differ as to whether particular acts in the recent Arab-Israeli war were self-defense. They agree that there has been more than enough violence but disagree as to the steps to be taken to forestall further violence.

In the Arab-Israeli clash of 1967, the combatants were primarily Jew and Muslim, and political leaders on both sides appealed to religious sympathy and tradition and skillfully manipulated these in support of the war effort. But this was Christendom's war too; or at least a fair number of people were trying to make it so—morally if not theologically.

Christian leaders have been called on, and no doubt will continue to be called on, to adjudicate the moral issues of the Holy Land. They form a "third party" in the bargaining, though they are far from

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being as disinterested as one might wish. A typical pro-Israeli appeal to Christians was the three-quarter-page ad published in the *New York Times* on Sunday June 4, the day before the Israeli attack. Headed "The Moral Responsibility in the Middle East"—the moral responsibility being "to support Israel's right of passage through the Straits of Tiran" — the ad declared that the threat to peace lay in "the recent Arab military mobilization along Israel's borders." "Let us recall," the ad continued, "that Israel is a new nation whose people are still recovering from the horror and decimation of the European holocaust." As the next six days were to prove, Israel was not so decimated that it had not been able to mobilize an army of men — and women! Presumably the signers of the ad—including such luminaries as John C. Bennett, Martin Luther King, Reinhold Niebuhr and Robert McAfee Brown—did not view Israel's own mobilization as a threat to peace.

That Israel took the offensive in the war only increased the pressure on Christian leaders for moral support. In city after city, representatives of the churches were called on to share the platform at meetings and rallies with rabbis and public officials and to affirm that Israel's cause was just. Clergymen were urged to assert what only a jurist or a Near Eastern specialist could competently assert, that the Israeli attack was not aggression but legitimate self-defense.

This is nothing new. Over the years pro-Israeli interests have systematically cultivated the Christian clergy. Until the mid-'50s, when it was exposed as a Zionist front and so discredited, the so-called American Christian Palestine Committee worked unremittingly to convince church leaders of Israel's moral and biblical claims to the territory she won by force of arms in 1948. Clergymen were offered free trips to the Holy Land, and during the past decade, other agencies have continued an Intourist-type treatment for ecclesiastical V.I.P.s visiting Israel. Thus we have a generation of church leaders schooled not to raise questions when Israel's 1948 war is called the "war of liberation." Apparently they are unaware that some crucial and embarrassing facts about that war have been swept under the red carpet.

The Refugee Problem

Of course, there have been appeals from the other side. But these are mainly humanitarian — appeals for the relief, however minimal,

of the thousands of refugees and other Palestinian Arabs who lost their livelihood in the war of 1948. (In the past month, incidentally, the number of refugees has increased by perhaps 100,000.) The focus is on the human need for two reasons: first, because it is immediate; second, because it is nonpolitical. Whereas Zionist political and philanthropic activities in the United States go hand in hand, American charitable and educational organizations working in Arab countries feel the need to remain scrupulously aloof from politics, lest there be a legal challenge to their philanthropic endeavors. The net effect is that the churches have been frightened away from any pro-Arab position. The refugees are dealt with as a virtually unexplained fact, and it is left to the individual to ask why they are refugees at all.

Indeed, the churches have been remiss in regard to the refugee problem. When the first phase of the recent war erupted, the church agencies and boards apparently were concerned chiefly for the safety of their personnel stationed in the Arab countries. The evacuation of these people made it impractical for the churches to commit themselves to extensive relief operations. Only on the 13th day of the crisis did timid TV coverage of Christian interests appear. Informed individuals in the churches campaigned here and there, but as of the last week of June official church support for the Arabs in their time of suffering remained seemingly sporadic.

The first public appeal for refugee relief appeared in the *New York Times* on the 20th day after the war began. Paid by private persons, this appeal called for contributions to three secular organizations working through United Nations channels. UNRWA, with an international staff already on the scene, was during the early weeks of the crisis better prepared than the American churches to offer aid; yet it took three weeks to muster support even for UNRWA. Meanwhile, appeals for support of Israel had been broadcast throughout the U.S.

Vietnam Doves as Israel Hawks

The Middle East crisis poses several problems for Christian ethics. One is how to support the desire of both Israelis and Palestinian Arabs for an assurance of national and personal peace and security. Even more difficult is the problem raised by U.S. national interests in the Middle East. Coming after a couple of winters of theological

discontent with our military involvement in Vietnam, the question of what should be the nature of our involvement in the Middle East will doubtless prompt lively discussion when seminaries resume classes in the fall.

Comparisons of U.S. policy in the Middle East and in Vietnam have swirled on editorial pages across the land. Seldom have newspapers had so much free copy from professionals. Historian Barbara Tuchman fired one of the first salvos in a letter appearing in the *New York Times* (and also in the *Washington Post*) on May 30. Claiming that Israel, as representing the source of the Judeo-Christian tradition, concerns America more nearly than South Vietnam Mrs. Tuchman argued that our government's standing by while the Gulf of Aqaba was blockaded was "the ultimate paralysis of power." "Futile fiddling" in the "cynical farce" of the United Nations is useless, she said, for "the family of nations is an illusion with which we comfort ourselves like a teething-ring." The fate of the Western democracies hangs on "independent action in support of our stated policy (which) is not intervention, nor is it something to be afraid of."

Three days later the *New York Times* published a reply by David Lelyveld, who described Mrs. Tuchman's "discussion of the issue as a question of American 'prestige' and a battle between higher civilization and lesser breeds" as:

> a return to the rhetoric of the era of high imperialism which she usually writes about. What is saddening is that respected public leaders like Martin Luther King who have courageously opposed American actions in Vietnam should now associate themselves with vague calls for American intervention on behalf of Israel.

Now the fat was in the fire. How could the Vietnam dove be the Israel hawk? Most liberal intellectuals, following Mrs. Tuchman, argued that our interests were more seriously threatened in the Middle East. It is astonishing that for three weeks practically no one engaged in the hawk-dove discussion suggested that our commitment to Israel had been, or ought to be, anything less than unlimited.

The issue was put clearly on June 25 by Yale's David Little in his important letter to the *Times:*

> Neither is our commitment to South Vietnam as "minimal" as is alleged, nor is our commitment to Israel as "maximal" as is implied... Our commitments do not obligate us to support, or

> even to condone, Israel's patent acts of expansionism, particularly against Jordan. . . . Self-defense in both the case of Vietnam and of Israel seems to be a just cause. In neither case may arbitrary expansionism be so designated. . . Premier Eshkol's recent declaration which implied that Israel alone is "entitled to determine what are (its) true and vital interests and how they shall be secured". . . is a cynical doctrine that undermines the notions of justice and law.

Why, during June, did so many of our liberals urge American support of Israel? Mainly because they saw Israel as the bastion of democracy in the Middle East. Israel, they declared, is our only friend, a bulwark against Russian influence in the Middle East — despite the evidence that the spread of Russian influence there is a result of America's long-standing favoritism toward Israel. Or, they said, Israel is a showplace of progressive Western ways — despite the fact that the capital required for technology has been uniquely available to Israel and that comparison of living standards in, say, Gaza Strip or Jordan (which have had so much less U.S. aid per capita) with those in Israel is acutely offensive to Arabs, who would develop a technology if they had the capital. Or again, they said that Israel is the only nation seeking peace in the Middle East — despite Israel's defiance of U.N. peace-keeping efforts for these 19 years, despite the speed with which she seems to have exhausted all alternatives to armed attack when Nasser closed the Straits of Tiran, and despite her delay in matching the Jordanian cease-fire until she had achieved her military objectives.

While Israel was winning the war, Secretary Dean Rusk stated America's position: "neutrality in thought, word, and deed." One wonders whether Washington would have been so calm if the Egyptians had deliberately torpedoed an American ship, if the Syrians had struck deep into Israel, if the Jordanians had systematically demolished an Israeli hospital or looted a museum or executed children at a boys' school. Our "neutrality" was partiality, the effects of which on future American-Arab relations can only be catastrophic.

Christian-Jewish Relationships

Language of this sort, indeed even the mildest criticism of Israel, raises still a third cluster of problems for Christians: Christian-Jewish relationships on the American scene. The current crisis has revealed

Jewish loyalties whose passionate intensity few Christians had been aware of.

Note first the genuinely gratifying advances that have been made in interfaith relationships among us. In the past two decades especially, we have witnessed a "coming of age" of the American Jewish community. The old barriers of prejudice have been falling away in most neighborhoods and professions. No longer are Jews "strange" people. Ours has become a religiously and culturally pluralistic world in which Jews are intelligent, talented neighbors. In this we rejoice.

But many of us Christians assume that Jews are almost exactly like us religiously, too—a naive and even pernicious assumption which, though it may seem to make for brotherhood, is based largely on ignorance. What separates Jews and Christians, alike heirs of Moses and the Prophets? Apart from the status of Jesus, not much, we have thought. The messiahship of Jesus is central to the Christian understanding of man and of God. Hence, Judaism appears to be a rejection of the heart of Christianity, a kind of hereditary Unitarianism. But such a view fails utterly to convey a *Jewish* understanding of man and God. To discover the heart of Judaism we must shift the focus from the messiahship of Jesus to the peoplehood of Israel.

The Peoplehood of Israel

In the rich complex of religious connotations attached to the idea of Jewish peoplehood two main themes are survival and suffering. Over the millenniums the scattered people of the Jews has clung to this religious tradition and this sense of national identity as the fortunes of politics drove it from land to land. In modern times the tradition has been realized in the State of Israel. But to the Jew the triumphs of the people are a sign of divine favor and its tragedies a divine testing. Nobody who watched the Shavuoth observances televised from the Wailing Wall in June could miss the note of tragedy underlying the song of triumph. The trauma inflicted on the Jew in 20th century Europe intensifies his feeling of urgency about a homeland, and as long as this feeling is alive there is slim chance of a reaffirmation of the American Reform rabbis' 1885 Pittsburgh platform: "We are no longer a nation but a spiritual community and therefore expect no return to Palestine."

Thus while in the Christian's view the State of Israel is simply

a political fact, for many Jews it is also a profoundly religious fact. That explains why by mid-June fund drives for Israel launched in the United States had brought in more than twice the amount she was reported to have spent on the June 5-10 battle. For example, a synagogue in Connecticut contributed the $ 10,000 it had salted away for its building fund. A Jewish businessman who led in organizing an Israel rally is reported as saying that he didn't know much about the Bible or about Middle Eastern politics but that for him giving to Israel is a *mitzvah*, a religious obligation.

For many American Jews, Zionism functions as a defense against assimilation to modern secular culture. They have no particular interest in traditional theology and ritual observance, but their community can achieve a sense of meaning and relevance by rallying around a tangible campaign. American Jews who feel guilty for having escaped the suffering of their European fellow Jews can atone by sacrificing financially now. Israel is the answer to European Jewry's need for a haven *for* everyday life, but it also meets American Jewry's need for a haven *from* the secular embrace of everyday life. That is to say, what is secular nationalism in Israel is piety in America. American Christians, so accustomed to doctrinal formulations of religion, have generally failed to grasp the nature of Jewish loyalty. And in the eyes of their brethren those American Jews who steadfastly object to political involvement with Israel are victims of an unduly spiritual (i.e., American) concept of religion.

Thus we can understand why American Jews view as a personal affront any criticism of the State of Israel. In the eyes of many, such criticism amounts to a blasphemous attack on their religious identity, almost as we would regard an attack on Christ. To assert that Israel has no historic claim to Palestine is to deny the Jew's interpretation of Scripture. To assert that Israel has no moral claim to Arab land is to deny the Jew compensation for Auschwitz and Buchenwald and thus to question divine justice. To assert that Israel had inadequate provocation for launching its preventive attack in June is to cast doubt on the fact of Jewish suffering and thereby on the "sacramental theology," which undergirds the fund drives. To suggest that Israel deserves no support from religious men because it inflicted suffering through acts of premeditated brutality is to question the concept of Jewish peoplehood. And, finally, to liken Israel's militancy to the Germans', the annexation of Old Jerusalem to Hitler's *Anschluss*, is the unpardonable sin.

Denunciations from Jewish Spokesmen

All of which is to say that anything short of total commitment to the rightness of Israel's cause is interpreted as anti-Semitism. As a matter of fact, even the grass-roots anti-Semites of the radical right have been silent of late, probably because our "enemy," the Soviet Union, supports the Arabs. All the same, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a body generally distinguished for liberality and intellectual integrity, has seemed downright paranoid in the current crisis. For example: Arthur Spiegel, Connecticut regional director for the A.D.L., commenting on William Buckley's protest against the league's monitoring of broadcasts, declared that Buckley "never lets a fact get in the way of his obsessive hatred of the A.D.L." — a remark irrelevant to the crisis at best and a piece of defamation at worst. Again, Arnold Forster, B'nai B'rith general counsel, dismissed Arab spokesman Mohammad T. Mehdi as "an Iraqi citizen who refuses American naturalization" and declared that "as a guest in this country Mehdi should refrain from criticizing activities of its citizens"— surely neither an invitation to examine the substance of Mehdi's statements nor a suggestion that American Jewish comments on developments in Iraq were off limits.

Jewish spokesmen have directed their scorn not only at political conservatives and "irresponsible Arab propagandists;" they have blasted the mainline churches whose clergy have been brotherhood-minded for years. For example, on June 22 Rabbi Balfour Brickner, director of Reform Judaism's Commission on Interfaith Activities — a normally cordial quarter—denounced the "Christian establishment" as silent "on support for the integrity of the State of Israel." To counter "these failures on behalf of the Christian church," he said, "let us first talk about Israel and its role in the life of the Jew... Understanding the very existence of the Jew precedes any interfaith conversations we might wish to have about Christian-Jewish understanding of conscience, morality or worship."

This, then, is the church's dilemma. For many Jews this war is a holy war. But is it therefore a holy war for Christians? In interfaith matters it is one thing to understand, quite another to agree. Anti-Semitism has to do with the spirit in which criticism is given; it must not be equated with the fact of disagreement.

Truth vs. Slanted Information

Christians, clearly, have moral concerns besides the concern for interfaith harmony. The concern for truth and justice, in my opinion, overrides the concern for harmony. Hence outright disagreement with Israel's carefully planned conquest of June 1967 is required of us. Christians must defy pressure on them to sit by silently, muzzled by the fear of being called anti-Semitic.

Besides caring for the hundreds of thousands of blamelessly suffering Palestinian Arabs and working to end their suffering through resettling them somewhere (even in America), the churches must look toward the preservation of free speech in our nation, in fact as well as in law. The right of dissent — staunchly defended by religious and secular intellectuals in respect to other issues — has been effectively suppressed in respect to the current crisis.

The powerful pressures which have made it possible for subtle pro-Israeli evaluations to pass as fact in the news have also caused even the most restrained mediating position to be assessed as Arab propaganda. For a time, virtually the only place in North America where the Arabs could be heard was the U.N. Official Washington, sensitive to the opinions of the voters, appears unable to penetrate the smokescreen of Israeli self-righteousness through which the Arab picture comes and seems ready to sacrifice American interests in the Arab world. Included in such a sacrifice would be the Christian educational, medical and evangelistic work built up over the past hundred years.

But the Christian losses will not only be overseas. Here in America, church leaders have unwittingly played into the hands of a militant foreign nationalism. So far as they have been victims of slanted sources of information they may perhaps be pardoned — Bennett on mobilization, Eugene Carson Blake on control of the Old City, any Christian spokesman who confers his blessing on Israel's nationalistic excesses. But so far as they have been victims, so far have they cast doubt on the reliability of the church's official judgments.

9

WESTERN PUBLIC OPINION AND THE PALESTINE CONFLICT*

FATHER JEAN CORBON

I SHALL NOT TRY in this lecture to categorise all the different shades of Western opinion. We all know that, generally speaking, and with few exceptions, Western public opinion does not understand the Palestine conflict. We know that it is one-sided and pro-Zionist. Let us try therefore to understand why western opinion is what it is, so as to be able to make it better informed.

With this aim in mind I do not intend to analyse the external causes of this misinformation. These causes are many, and we know them too: links between the press and the world of finance; the poor quality of Arab information (particularly before June 5, 1967); the skill of Israeli information—these are perhaps the most important.

Nor are the problems of the content and presentation of information my concern here. (Suffice it to say that there have been important and objective information dossiers produced by the Arab world which have never reached a Western audience.) It seems to me far more interesting, and urgent, to try to analyse the *internal reasons*, situated in the receiver of information, that prevent him from accepting it. Why is Western public opinion tuned in, so to speak, to one wave-length, but not to the other? This is what we shall try to discover.

Various methods are possible, and we must pick out clearly the path we intend to follow. I start with my own experiences of contacts with Western opinion. The impression that we all receive from such

* The Institute of Palestine Studies is grateful to Father Jean Corbon for his permission to publish this lecture, originally given at the Ecole Supérieur des Lettres of Beirut, in February 1969.

encounters is that the most obvious and simple facts are rejected. Facts that are to us self-evident, such as Jewish terrorism before 1947, the events of 1947-49, 1956, 1967, more than a million people expelled: these simple facts are denied. Most Westerners seem not to see them, and if one has recourse to a more detailed analysis, again one meets a blank wall of incomprehension. Your interlocutor escapes, or changes the grounds of his argument. It is impossible to get him to admit the facts.

I suggest, as a starting point for the reflexions which follow, that we are faced with a *psychological knot* which has to be unravelled. Why is it that the simplest facts in this tragic Palestine problem are not accepted by the majority of Western opinion? It has nothing to do with reason—we only have to read the recent outpourings of the French press against General de Gaulle at the time of the arms embargo to realise that. Clearly this is a matter of passion, almost of pathology. Let us attempt to examine this phenomenon objectively, trying to avoid passionate reactions ourselves.

The Image of Palestine in the Western Subconscious

Let us first try to analyse, in its main lines, what Palestine represents in Western man's subconscious, and let us try to "objectivise" this image.

There are certain historical facts that have deposited, as it were, residues in the subconscious of public opinion. They are always present, even if one is not aware of them—*especially* if one is not aware of them—since, when they are not active *objectively* their impact is all the stronger. And these past facts that we are not aware of are all the stronger and more irrational in their influence if they have traumatised the consciousness that has experienced them.

First of all, let us look at the principal facts of Judeo-Palestinian history which have left their mark on Western consciousness. You know, of course, that the influence of the past, whether conscious or subconscious, is highly selective. To quote Alain Resnais: "We all live in the selective reality of memory."

Here, rapidly, are a few dates, a few facts, concerning Palestine in Western consciousness.

For the average Westerner, Palestine represents first of all the land that Joshua conquered, and which the Jewish people occupied, grosso modo, until the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70.

Out of these dozen centuries we remember this one global fact, forgetting—for forgetfulness is selective too!—the important fact of exile in 587 BC. We remember the fact that this people inhabited Palestine, while ignoring that from 587 BC onwards there was the equally important fact of the diaspora—a diaspora that has lasted until today. The majority of Jews have lived ever since that date outside Palestine.

Then there is emptiness. The second Judeo-Roman war of AD 135, the occupation of Palestine by the Byzantines in 395; a new Jewish revolt in 614 soon crushed by the Persians; the conquest of Omar ben Khattab in 637: all this is hazy or practically non-existent to the average Westerner.

The image of Palestine begins to emerge again a little later. In 1070 the Seljuks occupy Jerusalem. You know how the news came to the West: access to the Holy Places was forbidden to Christians —it was this ambiguous news that set in motion the First Crusade. Today, the average European or American does not know the origin of the First Crusade. But he remembers—and this is linked with his image of Palestine—that there was this First Crusade and that in 1099 the Crusaders finally managed to take Jerusalem. Then, after two centuries, things went wrong and in 1244 Jerusalem was retaken by the Turks.

Again a veil of forgetfulness covers several centuries. Few people know of the coming to Palestine of Mohammad Ali and of the consequences this event unleashed in the Middle East. For the average man Palestine re-emerges in 1947—indeed for the majority of Westerners the Palestinian problem *begins* in 1947.

These then are the three big moments when the image of Palestine is fixed in Western consciousness:

1. From before Christ until AD 70, the occupation of Palestine by the Jewish people.
2. Then Palestine occupied by Western Christians for the two centuries of the Crusades.
3. And then, in 1947, a new Jewish presence in this same Palestine.

If you look at several recently published history books you will find the main dates in the history of Judaism throughout the world. And then suddenly ... "1947, war of independence." War of independence against whom, in Palestine? But the question is seldom asked. Here is the conscious result of a whole subconscious process.

And this is the point of departure of the Palestinian problem for Western public opinion: in 1947 there was a *war of independence* and that is how it started.

Western Treatment of the Jews

To take one more step in this attempt at objectivity, let us see what the West experienced with its own Jews during these same centuries. Perhaps the origin of the pathological knot is to be found here. There is an ebb and flow. I shall give only a few characteristic dates.

During the whole period 613 to 1492 there is a long black list of expulsions. They begin and end in Spain.

613, first expulsion of Jews from Spain.

629, King Dagobert expelled the Jews from his kingdom. (A newspaper article that appeared in Israel at the time of the embargo reminded the French that Jews had occupied Gaul before them—correctly, since there had been Jews in Gaul from the 2nd century before Christ, whereas the Franks did not arrive there until long afterwards).

1215, throughout Europe Jews were compelled to wear pointed hats.

1290, they were expelled from England.

1294, from France.

1421, from Vienna.

1492, again from Spain.

This long unhappy period for Western Jews was marked by the predominance of the Sephardim, who were closely attached in their religious practices to the Babylonian Talmudic stream of Judaism. From the 15th and 16th centuries it was the Ashkenazis, more closely linked with Palestine, who came to the fore in France, Italy and Germany. This is not without importance.

The result of these expulsions was a movement of *emigration*. Up to the 17th century this emigration was eastwards; most of the Levantine Jews, our compatriots here, and those of Turkey, originated in these Western expulsions. Towards the end of the 17th century, with the discovery of the New World, the Jews of Spain and Portugal began to emigrate to Holland and South America.

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Another extremely important development, a reaction against mediaeval intolerance, was the movement towards *emancipation* which began in France.

On September 28, 1791, French Jews were granted equality of civil rights, thus becoming fully integrated French citizens. This movement spread to the rest of Europe:

1812, Prussia.

1848, the main political centres of Germany.

1859, Britain.

1867, Austria-Hungary.

1870, Italy. In the same year France gave French citizenship to Algerian Jews.

In Russia it was only in 1917 that Jews were given full citizenship.

During the 19th century, which was, as we shall see, the determining century in the Palestinian drama, in contrast to the movement towards emancipation the tragic phenomenon known as "pogroms" made its appearance:

First in Rumania in 1866.

1870, again Rumania.

1870, an anti-Semitic party was formed in Germany, which lasted until 1935.

1883, new pogroms in Russia.

1894-99, the Dreyfus affair in France.

1905, the notorious "October pogroms" in Russia—more than 600 in one month. In 1906, 1918 and 1921 they were repeated.

In the USSR, in 1928, 30,000 Jews were deported to Eastern Siberia.

Finally in 1940-45, the hecatomb in which 6 million Jews perished.

* * *

As a result of these atrocities the Jews sought refuge in new waves of emigration:

1. From 1820 to 1880, to North America, coming mainly from Western Europe.
2. From 1880 to 1920 to the United States, coming from central and eastern Europe.
3. And, after 1935, from Germany.

Finally, it was during the 19th century, marked as it was both by the recognition of the Jewish right to full citizenship in Western Europe, and by pogroms in Eastern Europe, that the first effective Zionist movement began. The movement spread between 1826 and 1947. Here are the principal dates:

1826, the first Zionist settlement in Palestine.

1860, creation of the Universal Jewish Alliance.

1883, the first Rothschild foundation in Palestine.

1890, the Bilou movement was begun in Russia to give strong encouragement to Jewish emigration to Palestine.

1896, (a very important date), the publication of Herzl's "The Jewish State."

1897, the First Zionist Congress.

November 2, 1917, the Balfour Declaration. (As for the sequel, we know it only too well.)

Four Main Images

Is it possible to pinpoint the "cultural residues" of these events in Western consciousness? I think we can group them in four main images.

1. *The image of Palestine itself:* In the Western subconscious Palestine is the land of the Jews. This is a postulate which is not proved, which appears not to need proof, *and therefore cannot be disproved*: a Jewish country, vaguely reconquered by Christians out of piety, but finally taken by the Jews in 1947. And though this is hard to chart exactly, it is clear that in this Western image of Palestine as the "promised land" there is an element of irrational nostalgia for a "golden age." That the phrase should be part of the vocabulary of the revealed religions is not surprising. But it is astonishing to find the words "promised land" used by unbelievers. It is present, a sort of mirage, among many leftists, for example, who accept without question that this land is "promised" to the Jews.

I do not wish to embark here on an analysis of this archetypal image, except to point to it briefly as an archetype of the earth, of the home, of paradise lost, of which the Jewish people have become the incarnation.

This desire to see paradise on earth is nearer the heart of the matter than you might believe. I shall come back to this later when I deal with the conflict itself and the subconscious messianism that

it reveals.

2. There is a second, extremely complex image in Western opinion: *that of Western Jews.* We should not be breaking new ground if we say that it is made up of two contradictory elements. First of all there is a sense of guilt. The Western conscious is scarred with traumatisms. Endemically genocidal towards their own Jewish compatriots, Westerners naturally have a bad conscience. But disagreable though it is to admit it, cohabiting with guilt in the Western subconscious there is a sort of continuing "allergy" towards Jews. People tolerate with difficulty these fellow citizens who appear at one moment as victims, the next as profiteers. Guilt and hostility form the constants of Western anti-semitism.

But not everything can be blamed on medievalism in the Western mentality. There is something deeper. In the present phase of the Palestinian drama the Western attitude to Jews creates a basic irrationality in our comprehension of the conflict. There is a subconscious desire to relieve ourselves of blame. We feel guilty about the Jews, but at the same time we do not feel at ease with them. By saying: Let them go back to Palestine! we appease at one and the same time our guilt and our uneasiness. It is so convenient that we do not want to see that other people have been made to suffer.

3. There is also *the image of the Arabs* in the Western subconscious; and this is where things begin to get complicated, and to reach the dimensions of real conflict. I do not want to generalise; I am French and I am trying to see what goes on in my own subconscious. For us, the first image of the Arabs which we received in the schoolroom was the Battle of Poitiers.* Then, with a bit more history, there were the Saracens of the Dark Ages: the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries. Inhabitants of the south of France, Italy and Spain can still see the archeological remains of the Saracens' presence. Then we learnt about the Reconquista of Spain. And then the Crusades. The way in which these events were presented to us awoke the ancient sense of chivalry that sleeps in each one of us. We tended to confuse Turks with Arabs, and Arabs with Moslems. The Crusades were viewed simply as attacks against the Arab world. Later the Ottoman Empire became for us part of the same Arab world. Ottomans, Seljuks, it is all too complicated; for the average European today, they are all Arabs.

Again the 19th century was a turning point, bringing with it

* In 732 Charles Martel defeated the Arabs at the Battle of Poitiers.

the rediscovery of the world by the West. And rediscovery meant conquest and empire-building. For the Arabs this meant the conquest of North Africa between 1830 and 1913 by France and Italy: a process which created a new, more conscious relationship which is a determinant in the present conflict. I do not need to elaborate. Even though this episode is finished it is still a generator of emotion. You know what passions the Algerian war aroused in French public opinion.

4. Finally, it is the *non-Jewish Westerner's own self-image* that enters into the conflict. Up to the 19th century Western man reacted to these three stimulants: Palestine, Jews, Arabs, in various ways. From the 19th century onwards all three reactions converge, and it is here that the psychological knot begins. There is a meeting of primary reactions. What is it, this conflict within the Western mind, centred upon Palestine?

Conflicts Within the Western Mind: Palestine as a Point of Fixation

First of all, let us enumerate the different factors that are involved in this conflict within the Western mind about Palestine.

1. There is the rejection by modern Western man of the Middle Ages, or more exactly, his rejection of the medieval mentality. With regard to Jews in particular there is a conscious and violent repudiation of the Catholic theocracy of the Middle Ages, which was at the bottom of all the expulsions I mentioned earlier. Modern Western man rejects consciously both anti-semitism, and that form of the state in which religion and politics are closely linked. He regards himself as emancipated, free, developed.

Here lies one of the important subconscious reasons for opposition towards a world which is considered to be backward in this particular way. I have been struck by this in my meetings with students and professors of theology coming here from every corner of the Western world. One of their assumptions is that the Arab East is still sunk in the theocratic mentality of the Catholic Middle Ages, which Westerners have rejected.

2. The second tendency stems from a more complex residuum. You know the saying *Cujus regio ejus religio* (every region has its own religion), which governed the partition of religious groups

not only in the Middle Ages, but even in modern times. Many a war of religion was due to it; and if such wars began to end in the 17th century, the mentality that created them did not disappear until the French Revolution, and only to the extent that the spirit of the Revolution spread through Europe.

3. But, though it belongs to the past, this residual complex is still latent, and can conflict with the concepts of the great age of enlightenment: freedom, mutual respect, tolerance, rationality. Still, in the 20th century, the conflict is there, in France, in Italy, in Germany. The accepted principles of reason, liberty and equality have not yet fully depassionalised relations between citizens, even on the religious level. This means that the Western subconscious is not able to accept peacefully and objectively the truth of what is happening in Palestine. The religious factor is always thrown into the argument, even when it is irrelevant, as when leftist leaders invoke the "promised land" idea.

4. Another very important factor is the industrial expansion of 19th century Europe. This brought internal strains that tended to be projected outwards upon other non-Western peoples. The cruel disparity in development between different social groups in the industrialised societies of Europe and America was projected to the rest of the world. This also is disagreeable for a Westerner to admit.

5. Lastly, in relation to Zionism, there is a factor which I hope I may mention without ill will: the messianism of the Protestant democracies of the 19th century. During this epoch we find the flowering in the Protestant democracies of a strongly missionary and pro-Zionist messianism. Here I refer you to a very revealing study by Dr. A. Zahlan of the American University of Beirut on *Cultural Factors in the Palestine Problem.** There is also a long study by Pasteur J.M. Hornus on the *History of Protestantism in the Middle East,* published in the review *Proche Orient Chrétien* between 1957 and 1964.

Protestant Christianity of the 19th century in the powerful democracies of Europe and America was strongly marked by the Old Testament. The piety of the American people is impregnated with Old Testament teaching (eg. wealth as a sign of divine blessing). It was often asserted in the writings of the theologians of those days, particularly of the missionaries, that reformed Protestant Christianity was the legitimate inheritor of the Old Testament People of God.

* Published by the *Middle East Newsletter,* January-February 1969.

They displayed a renewed interest—romantic but also logical—in the land of Palestine. Their self-avowed aim was to hasten Christ's Second Coming. According to their interpretation of Chapter 2 of the Epistle to the Romans they believed that the conversion of the entire Jewish people would mark the end of the world. There grew up a movement favouring simultaneously the return of the Jews to Palestine and Christian proselytising among Jews there.

It is interesting to recall here a rather curious event that gave rise to a new local Church: the creation of the episcopalian archbishopric of Jerusalem towards the end of the 19th century. It was born from the dreams of the Emperor Frederick William IV and an Anglican bishop, each haunted by the immediate prospect of Christ's coming. It was essential to go to Jerusalem, and live there among other Christians. So the Jerusalem archbishopric was founded and it was agreed that the incumbency would alternate between a German Lutheran and an Anglican. The first archbishop was a German Lutheran, since the German Emperor had plans for the Middle East. Unfortunately he died after only four years. His successor, an Anglican as agreed, lived a very long time. He survived the First World War, which is why the archbishopric has remained Anglican. Members of the Church smile at its origins; nevertheless they are evidence of the mentality of those times.

It would be tedious to quote from the missionaries who worked in Palestine in the 19th century, or to give you all the texts from the Old Testament they cited to support their thesis. The chaplain of the British Embassy in Vienna, a great friend of Herzl's, even tried to convert the father of Zionism to Christianity!

Such views may appear a little absurd to us now. But they have to be pointed out because they are real and persist in many minds. As a recent example there is the statement signed by 16 professors of theology in the United States after the June War, in which they demanded that Jerusalem should stay united under Israeli rule, and backed their stand with Biblical arguments. This is a mentality which has survived the Renaissance, the Reform, the Century of Enlightenment and Technology!

Some Approaches to the Conflict

Where then is the conflict, the true conflict? It seems to me that the Palestinian conflict existed in Western consciousness well before

1947—that fateful year that Western opinion has called the war of "liberation." Primarily it is the conflict we have already referred to, engendered by industrial civilisation with its seed of latent messianism. The new factor that we meet here is that this messianic Western industrialism, which spread throughout the world, met with an opposition in the Middle East that it met nowhere else. There is a point of fixation here. We shall try to approach it from different angles.

1. There is first of all a Western feeling of superiority which tends to come to the surface in the Middle East. I mention it not to attack the West itself, but so as to explain what one meets when one tries to explain the Palestinian problem. These irrational walls against which we fling our facts have been partly built out of a feeling of superiority. "But look what they have done in 20 years!" Why such a subconscious complicity? Because when we recognise ourselves in others we cannot help admiring them. The technically advanced West cannot help admiring itself in Israel.

2. Westerners also harbour a mediaeval image of the Middle East, which has been exaggerated and deformed by the teaching methods of the 19th century and later. One cannot insist too much upon the defects of this primitive type of primary teaching—faults which still have not been corrected.

3. Another approach, which I can only sketch here, would be to study the difference between the relationships of the West and the Arab East in the 11th century and in the 19th. Taking the 11th century as a point of comparison, we see a whole civilisation coming from the Middle East to the West, enriching our greatest thinkers. There was a war of pen and sword; but there was also a certain equality. But in the 19th century the West remade its Middle East through its techniques, and its industrial civilisation, without taking anything in return. When it could have received something in return, it chose to see nothing. Hence this self-satisfied ignorance which is the cause of so much misunderstanding.

4. There is also the problem of language. On this subject, one fears that the further one goes, the less understanding there will be. The Palestine problem is insoluble to the Western mind. Each side speaks a language that is becoming progressively less intelligible to the other; communication is becoming more and more difficult. There are signs of schizophrenia in the Western mind—it no longer responds to signs and symbols. Arabs speak a language that Western culture no longer understands.

5. There is also an implicit concept of man. I may seem here to be launching into thin air. And yet there is a relation between philosophical concepts and the most matter-of-fact reactions of the average man. From mediaeval scholasticism to modern structuralism: there is an unbroken logic in Western culture. We can say that man is conceived in the West as a nature in himself, as an envelope of possibilities, an accumulator of power. That this potentiality should transform itself into action is taken for granted. So "Bravo little one!" as Jean Cau said in June 1967.*

In the Middle East the implicit concept of man is different. Though the difference is difficult to express, I feel it. Here, man is seen less as an independent unit than as a being "in relation" with other beings. He is in a state of dialogue, with God, with other men. He reaches out towards the universe, like an appeal. This is very different from being a "nature."

What are the practical consequences of these different concepts of man? First of all, the famous achievements of the Israelis, which we hear so much about in the West. However hard you try to prove by facts and figures that during the same period, and in relation to its possibilities, Jordan developed at a higher rate, the average Westerner will never believe it. His refusal to understand is linked to a certain understanding of man, it is a judgement on others through the image of man that he carries in himself. He speak of Israel's achievements. But when you tell him about the people who lived there before, it carries no weight. They have been given the label of "refugees"—a label which is in itself an interpretation of history, since in reality these people are "expulsees." To call them "refugees" is a way of imposing on them our solution of their problem—they have sought refuge outside, let them remain there. Yes, this implicit concept of man, carries with it a whole scale of values.

6. Another possible ingredient in this psychological knot could be the will to power when it meets resistance. Everywhere in the world the West in full expansion has met with resistance of different kinds. But I think this particular case is different because the culture that animates the West is closely linked with the Middle East. To encounter resistance from a part of oneself, that is what is irritating. The wars of the Far East and Africa may arouse admiration, pity,

* Jean Cau, a French journalist, wrote this of Israel's victory in *Candide*, July 31, 1967.

or indifference, but they never arouse in Western public opinion the semi-pathological passions which one meets when one speaks about Palestine. There is something unique here.

7. Another approach: has the West really solved the problem of its own pluralisms? It seems to me that there is a great deal of ambiguity in the famous democratic liberties of the Western world. In principle, anyone can feel at home there; and I hope that I can say without sounding chauvinistic that France is the country where Jews have been best received since 1945. But in this case, as in so many others, is simple coexistence enough? Coexistence is compatible with rejection of the other. Many minorities, ethnic and religious, coexist in countries called free, yet they are rejected. Thus the Palestine problem sharpens and exposes like a reproach the unresolved problem of pluralism in the West. This is one reason why there is is such zeal to solve the Palestine problem by a rejection of pluralism. It would soothe the conscience of the West if it could prove that coexistence in Palestine is impossible.

8. Another way of expressing this ambiguity would be to recognise the presence in the Western consciousness not only of a conscious will towards equality, fraternity and liberty, but also of subconscious motives of discrimination. The Algerian war revealed the racist depths in French public opinion, just as the racial crisis does now in the United States, and we have to admit that a stratum of racism exists in all of us. What is irritating about Western public opinion in relation to the Palestine problem is not that it should be blocked by a complex, but that it does not admit that the complex exists. When one begins to recognise the existence of a pathological knot, one is halfway to being cured. The inner conflict in Western public opinion comes down finally to a refusal to see that the conflict exists.

Conclusion

The struggle for Palestine belongs, it seems to me, to a different type of war from the others of the 20th century. We have had Great Wars, World Wars, one empire confronting another. We have had, and are still having, wars of liberation and decolonisation. The war in Palestine has some of the characteristics of both these types: two Great Powers are confronting each other, and a people is struggling against foreign occupation, Israel being the latest in the line of colonial powers. But there is something more, which is why it touches

such a sensitive area of Western consciousness.

The war in Palestine has engaged a certain sense of what man is. I will not say a whole civilisation, but certain values of Western civilisation are involved, and they are bound to show their real nature. Many ambiguities are being revealed, especially when we bring religious motives into the debate. There is great need to dissociate religious categories from political realities: to demystify these religious categories, so often used as arguments to support a political aim.

What is really at issue? As I see it, it is a certain kind of messianism. Every man has his own messiah, as he has his ideology. I believe that in the Palestinian drama, the West has deeply committed its own promethean messianism. According to this type of messianism man is will power, which can dominate and consume everything. But this pure will power, whatever it may produce in the future, has started to crumble. The promethean world is in its death agony. Governments and pressure groups may reach a modus vivendi, but this will solve nothing. Beyond a romantic, an economic, or a theological interest, Palestine for Western man is a projection of his own unresolved internal conflicts.

In the face of a messianism that is beginning to fail, contested by the man-object which it has produced, faced with the resistance of the other part of himself which the Middle East represents for Western man, what can we do? Is it possible to modify the subconscious of Western man? I do not know. But I am convinced that it is here that the drama is unfolding. And the solution also is here.

Beirut
February 1969

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AN OPEN LETTER FROM AMERICAN CHRISTIANS IN THE LEBANON

Dear Fellow Christians: June 5, 1969

A YEAR AGO A NUMBER OF US who are American missionaries and Church-related personnel serving in Lebanon wrote to our fellow Christians in the West on the first anniversary of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. (See the *Christian Century* June 5, 1968, p. 757). In our letter we commended to you the importance of an informed and responsible stance toward the continuing Middle East crisis. We spoke of the obligation to combat stereotypes about the Middle East, to dig out the facts both of the historical background of the present situation and of present events, and to understand the feelings on both sides of the conflict. We urged you to question the assumption that military accomplishment is its own justification. We urged you to reject the assumption that the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and of a large part of Palestine is somehow the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. We reminded you of the obligation Christians have to minister to the last, the least, and the lost of this world (we had in mind the Palestinian Arab refugees) and to prevent new wounds even while binding up old ones. In a way, we were asking for the "even-handedness" which Governor Scranton was to call for later in 1968.

Much of what we wrote to you last year is still relevant today. The United Nations resolution of Nov. 22, 1967, still stands unimplemented. The Palestinian refugees have suffered through another year of exile and frustration in their make-shift shelters. But political and military developments here in the Middle East during the past few months as well as the attempts by the four "great powers" to work toward a solution of the Palestine problem impel us to speak again.

Although the Middle East problem may seem to be as complex as ever, we are convinced that recent events have shown where the priority lies. Navigational rights through the Suez canal and the Straits of Tiran are no longer matters of serious dispute. An Israeli withdrawal from much of the territory it occupied during the 1967 conflict and realignment of some of the national boundaries could well be submitted to negotiation as part of an over-all settlement. The status of the Arab part of Jerusalem, where most of the holy sites of the city are to be found, is still an issue on which there seems to be very little hope of agreement between the various parties (even though the United Nations voted 99-0 to condemn Israeli annexation of the city), but even here some eventual neutral or "free" status of the city may be a distant possibility.

All of these issues within the problem are significant and indeed potentially explosive. However, a satisfactory resolution of any or all of them would not move the Middle East any closer to a lasting and viable peace, because all of them are tangential to the fundamental issue.

The number one question which must be answered before there is any reasonable hope of peace in the area, and the question upon whose answer the answer to all the other questions within the problem depend, is simply this: *What is to happen to the Palestinian Arabs?* Over the past 21 years over two million Arabs whose families have lived in Palestine for centuries have been pressured, frightened and in some cases driven out of their homeland by the exclusive territorial demands of twentieth-century Jewish immigrants. You have been repeatedly subjected by the Western press to panic talk about the Arabs threatening to "drive the Jews into the sea," but ironically, what has actually happened is that the Zionists have driven as many Arabs as possible into the desert.

The Palestinian Arabs refuse—in spite of all the Arab military disasters—to accept this seizure of their homeland by an alien Western political movement. This Palestinian Arab resolve is well illustrated by the remark of Prof Walid Khalidi, a distinguished Palestinian Arab scholar now on the faculty of the American University of Beirut: "We are an old Jerusalem family—we've been there for a great many years—certainly for more years than the L.B.J.'s have been in Texas, and—if I may say so without presumption—than the Royal Family has been in England. The idea that Palestine is not my country, that it is the country of Mr. Eban, who first came

to it from South Africa in 1946, seems to me absolutely ridiculous." Long ago, with brutal logic, Moshe Dayan conceded the principle of Prof. Khalidi's position: "Who are we to argue against their [the Arabs'] hatred? For eight years now they sit in their refugee camps in Gaza, and before their very eyes we turn into our homestead the land and the villages in which they and their forefathers have lived. . . . We are a generation of settlers, and without the steel helmet and the cannon we cannot plant a tree and build a house." (Uri Avnery, *Israel without Zionists*, Macmillan, 1968, p. 134)

The past eighteen months have seen the rise of the most effective Palestinian liberation movement since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. In contrast to previous Arab resistance activity the *fedayeen* ("those who sacrifice themselves") are now well-organized, well-equipped, and possess all the financial and manpower resources they can use. The *fedayeen* enjoy popular support in virtually all Arab countries, but most important, they are now recognized by the vast majority of Palestinian Arabs both within the other Arab countries and within the Israeli-occupied West Bank as the expression in action of the legitimate Palestinian Arab demand for justice. Every Israeli blow against the Arabs has simply strengthened the *Fedayeen* movement.

The possibility of a "settlement" imposed upon the Palestinians by either the great powers or the United Nations or even the Arab states and Israel becomes increasingly irrelevant to the situation as each day passes. The Palestinians are now unwilling to let any one else—even other Arabs—determine for them the final disposition of their homeland and their identity as a people.

Where do Christians stand in all this? Whether Western or Arab Christians they are torn by an agonizing dilemma. On the one hand, peace in the Middle East must be based on justice for those whose legitimate home is Palestine, and it may well be the case, as it was with the Resistance Movements in the German-occupied countries of Europe during World War II, that justice must be sought through armed struggle. On the other hand, Christians are fully conscious of the fact that the escalation of violence may move the combatants further from an eventual reconciliation, and Christians here as everywhere are called specifically and concretely to a ministry of reconciliation. What further alarms many of us is that the escalation of violence and the bitterness which the Palestinians justly feel are making Arabs increasingly vulnerable to the importation of bigoted anti-Jewish

propaganda pamphlets from the West.

Is there any way in which the future of the Middle East could hold the promise of something other than implacable hatred, vindictive contempt, and endless rounds of indecisive little slaughters? *No, not if the situation continues as it is.*

We believe that there is indeed a solution, one that deserves the active and prayerful support of Christians throughout the world and one that envisages neither descent into the abyss of incessant warfare nor escape into the illusion of a utopia. For years some Israeli Jews (notably Uri Avnery, a member of the Israeli parliament) and thoughtful Palestinian Arabs (including spokesmen for the *fedayeen* organizations) have each advocated an eventual solution in which both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs would work out together (no doubt through a large number of Middle Eastern compromises) a common political and cultural destiny for the land of Palestine. A number of labels have been appended to such a possibility and a number of analogies have been drawn with other nations where a workable incorporation of diverse groups into one nation has been achieved: "a bi-national state," "a pluralistic secular state", or better yet, "a Semitic union." According to such a plan a new "Palestine" would emerge in place of the present state of Israel, which is committed to remaining strictly Jewish. Such a Palestinian state (whatever its eventual name) would provide all groups with proportional rights and privileges in the national life and government. The models for such a state are at hand already in the Middle East in Lebanon (Christian, Muslim, and Druze) and Cyprus (Greek Christian and Turkish Muslim). We know from first-hand experience that in neither Lebanon nor Cyprus has the way towards national unity been smooth or simple, but in both cases the common ground between the factions has been sufficient to keep some sort of national government going.

Such a solution would mean, of course, a "de-Zionization" of Israel, for Israel has always insisted that it wants a purely Jewish state. We submit that this Israeli kind of ideological exclusivism is definitely not the viable way for nation states on our rapidly shrinking planes. It may even be that Zionism itself is fading as an ideological battle flag among the younger generation in Israel. Uri Avnery points out in a recent book that "'talking Zionism' in current slang among Israeli youth means 'talking nonsense,' using highfaluting slogans devoid of concrete meaning." (*Israel Without Zionists*, p. 157) If this report is true, it is surely a hopeful sign.

We therefore offer for your informed reflection the possibility of a pluralistic and cooperative settlement of the present agonies of the Middle East. We are fully aware of the tenuous nature of such a possibility, but we ask you: Which is the possibility that Christians can more responsibly work for, a difficult reconciliation between bitter enemies or never-ending rounds of warfare between an ethnically myopic state and its implacably hostile neighbors?

The Christian vision for the Church has always been that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free (Gal. 3:28). This Christian vision has captured the imagination of secular idealists the world over. Is it practical outside the Church? It had better be, if we are not all to perish together.

Signatories

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Mrs. Carol Weir
Mrs. Jeannine Willmon
the Rev. J. Conrad Willmon
Miss Faith Winger

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CHURCH STATEMENTS

A) Statement of The National Council of Churches of America, July 7, 1967

The Crisis in the Middle East

IN THE MIDDLE EAST TODAY the world is paying the price for its willingness to ignore explosive situations of human need and national hatred as though time alone would remove them. The National Council of Churches confesses its participation in this sin of neglect.

In an area which has long seen differing peoples contending for homeland, the state of Israel came into being in 1948. The displacement from their homes of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs relegated them to refugee status and all too often confined them to misery and despair. For a generation they have cried out for redress of their grievances. Among the few who have heard have been Arab leaders, outraged at the establishment of Israel in the first place and fearful of her future expansion. The churches have also heard. Christians, as well as Jews and Muslims, are closely bound by historic ties to the land where all three faiths had their origin. But our contribution to the relief of suffering and the pursuit of justice there has been inadequate when compared to our resources.

For a generation the world has heard politically inspired threats of a war of extermination against Israel. It has heard answering threats of retaliation by Israel. The consequences speak for themselves. During this period we Christians have said little and done little to seek assurance for Israel that extermination would not be her fate. We

have called on neither the Arab states nor Israel to abandon warfare as the means for settlement of conflicting national interests.

Now that violence has erupted, the National Council of Churches will not fail to help those who have suffered. We strive to encourage every means of negotiation and agreement which might remove the causes of violence. This does not mean that we are unaware of the moral claims made by both sides. These claims exist in historical circumstances which are at best ambiguous in a century which has been singularly unkind to Arabs and Jews alike.

The National Council of Churches lists below six major issues which we believe must be dealt with if there is to be peace in the Middle East.

1. *Territorial Integrity*

With due consideration for the right of nations to defend themselves, the National Council of Churches cannot condone by silence territorial expansion by armed force. Israel's unilateral retention of the lands she has occupied since June 5 will only deepen the divisions and antagonisms which separate her from those neighbors in the midst of whom she must dwell.

The territorial frontiers of the states of the Middle East should now be definitely established by negotiation in treaties of peace, and the integrity of such frontiers should be assured by international protection. No territories should be gained or boundaries violated by force. The international community should take all necessary action to prevent territorial changes brought about by other than peaceful means.

2. *The Acceptance of the State of Israel*

Indispensable to peace in the Middle East is acceptance by the entire international community of the state of Israel, ultimately in a peace treaty or by de facto means short of a treaty. Early talks between the belligerents with or without the good offices, conciliation or mediation of a third party are encouraged.

3. *The Refugees*

Means must be found to remove the festering cause of suffering and unrest which is the displacement of the Palestinian Arabs. Israel must accept significant responsibility for solving the refugee problem.

The bringing into being of thousands of new refugees day by day in the wake of the recent hostilities demands the urgent attention of the world. Israel should do everything in her power to encourage such refugees to remain and to facilitate their re-admission to their homes.

We believe possible alternatives for solving the refugee problem of longer standing are repatriation of those who became refugees prior to the 1967 hostilities, to their former homes or nearby, or emigration to other lands of their choice. In either case the refugees should have status of full citizenship and their rights protected. We view these as minimum options to achieve approximate justice, and recognize that these programs will require imagination, patience, and substantial funds. Israel, together with the Arab states and other members of the international community, must share responsibility for solving this refugee problem.

4. *Jerusalem*

We support the establishment of an international presence in the heretofore divided city of Jerusalem which will preserve the peace and integrity of the city, foster the welfare of its inhabitants, and protect its holy shrines with full rights of access to all. We encourage the earliest possible advancement of United Nations proposals to make such arrangements practicable.

We cannot approve Israel's unilateral annexation of the Jordanian portions of Jerusalem. This historic city is sacred not only to Judaism, but also to Christianity and Islam.

5. *Arms Control*

The extension of militarism in the Middle East raises the specter of nuclear confrontation, both between the super powers and, potentially, between the Arab states and Israel. As long as other countries of the world ship arms to the antagonists, either in military aid to establish a balance of deterrence or on purchase orders, the danger of new bloodshed and escalation will remain. We call on all arms-exporting nations to subscribe to the proposal for the establishment of an effective arms-monitoring and control commission in the United Nations. We believe also that arms control is necessary, and that expenditures for armaments should be replaced by expenditures for peaceful purposes.

6. *Reconciliation and Reconstruction*

A new will and spirit must obtain, both in the Middle East and in bodies politic around the world, if peace and development are to come to the Middle East. The cruel inequities of wealth, exploitation, poverty, and illiteracy should be corrected, and social changes should be encouraged and supported to that end. Cooperative efforts to utilize scarce fresh water resources such as the Jordan River and practical applications of de-salinization research, are merely two obvious priority needs if arable lands are to be expanded for the benefit of Arab and Israeli alike.

Free trade and with it free access to the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal by all countries in the area will establish and expand the economies of each nation so that all may prosper. With trade must be coupled capital for investment and construction. We advocate a full-scale development program for the entire area, underwritten by a development bank for the Middle East or by commitments from private or public sources with sufficient capital to join in the endeavor. The establishment of a research institute in Jerusalem or elsewhere, bringing together in dialogue for problem-solving the best minds in the Middle East, Arab and Israeli, would contribute substantially to a plan for growth and a spirit of mutual endeavor. The National Council of Churches stands ready to work with the World Council of Churches, national governments, private foundations, or any interested party for the realization of peace with justice in the Middle East.

We record our conviction that these issues in the Middle East must be resolved in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and that the members of the United Nations should fulfill their responsibility both inside and outside the UN in order to bring about such resolution.

Our commitment to the task of peace-keeping motivates us to pursue it across the cultural, confessional, ideological, and national divisions of man. Therefore:

1. We call upon our churches, in the ministry of service and compassion, to support the appeal of the World Council of Churches for an initial sum of two million dollars to be used for relief of all war sufferers throughout the entire area and for resumption of work among the neediest people. Church World Service is to be commended and encouraged to raise one million

dollars as our share.

2. Our people should be challenged to support negotiation on the difficult issues. The United Nations peace keeping program must be enlarged to foster international judgment, enabling it to override national sovereignties and conflicting interests to the end that peace may be patiently and finally established.

3. Believing that the present crisis offers further challenge for conversations on international issues with representatives of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities, we encourage the Department of International Affairs to seek and receive every opportunity to involve the widest possible member communion and Council representation for such dialogues.

4. We ask the Division of Christian Unity and the Division of Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches to continue to explore with the World Council of Churches the possibilities for an Inter-faith Center in Jerusalem that would be a place for encounter, study and action among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

5. We commend the World Council of Churches for its program of service and compassion and its mission of fellowship to the area. We offer not only our support but indicate our readiness to respond to their suggestions for ways we can:

a. Testify to the solidarity within the world Christian community.
b. Explore with our Christian brothers in the area appropriate conversation with representatives of the Israeli and Arab communities.
c. Understand the program and needs of the churches and institutions of the other communities of faith.
d. Be a ministry of listening to the concerns of Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

B) Middle East Statement of the World Council of Churches, Canterbury, August 28, 1969

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, reviewing the situation in the Middle East in the light of the resolution of the Uppsala Assembly and later events in the area, notes with deep concern the constant deterioration of the situation and the increasing threat of an explosion which could affect the peace of the world, adopts as its own the principles which the former Central Committee of the World Council of Churches set forth in its statement on the

Middle East at Heraklion in August, 1967.

1. Recognizes that no lasting peace is possible without respecting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian and Jewish people presently living in the area and without effective international guarantee for the political independence and territorial integrity of all nations in the area, including Israel;
2. Recognizes that the great powers have special responsibility for creating the political climate and the external circumstances in which peace can be restored on the basis of the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1957;
3. Believes that in supporting the establishment of the State of Israel without protecting the rights of Palestinians injustice has been done to Palestinian Arabs by the great powers which should be redressed.[1]
4. Re-affirms that the World Council of Churches should continue to fulfil its responsibility to serve the needs of all refugees, and requests it to include in this concern both Arabs and Jews and the basic idea of legitimate free movement;
5. Welcomes the plans to convene in Cyprus in September next a consultation on "The Middle East Refugee Programme," and prays that our churches will have a renewed sense of the continuing and increasing tragedy of the Palestinian refugees and other displaced persons, and of the imperative obligations of the churches to minister to their needs and support their basic demand for justice;
6. States again its concern that basic internationally recognized human rights be observed for all people and urges the General Secretary of the United Nations to intensify his actions towards this end;
7. Suggests that the subject of biblical interpretation be studied in order to avoid the misuse of the Bible in support of partisan political views and to clarify the bearing of faith upon critical political questions;
8. Recommends that serious consideration be given by the appropriate department of the World Council of Churches to initiating discussions with Christians, Jews and Moslems as to the guardianship of the Holy Places, the status of Jerusalem and the people of the city.

[1] Recent Church statements have tended to show much more awareness of the situation of the Palestine Arabs than those issued in 1967 and before.–Ed.

C) EXTRACT FROM THE STATEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CYPRUS CONSULTATION* ON THE PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM, OCTOBER 1969.

As we look back on the First and Second Beirut Conferences which had expressed their shock at the plight of the refugees from Palestine, and re-read the words of the 1951 Conference Statement:

> More than three-quarters of a million Palestinian refugees have been subjected to terrible privations, lasting in many cases for a period of three years. They have suffered grievous physical and material losses, but their mental, moral and spiritual hurt has perhaps been even greater. Furthermore there is no end in sight.

we realize that in 1969 the plight of the Palestinian refugees is even worse; there has been no progress in their return to their homeland —on the contrary, hundreds of thousands more have lost their homes and so far there has been no restoration of justice and peace in the Middle East.

Through two decades the relief and rehabilitation agencies of the churches have sought to be wise stewards of the resources provided by church people in many countries for relieving the plight of the refugees and for helping them to maintain human dignity. Our work for refugees has been in close cooperation with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The experiences of the years have deepened our awareness of the enormity of the tasks faced by UNRWA, and the competence and dedication with which it has dealt with the complex problems of the refugees.

Guide lines suggested to the Churches

Essential as programmes of relief and rehabilitation are, however, we are convinced that in themselves they are not an adequate Christian response to the injustice and misery under which the great majority of the Palestinian refugees continue to suffer, despite all the efforts of the United Nations. Nor is relief and rehabilitation alone a response to the aspirations for self-determination and nationhood of the Pales-

* The Consultation was convened by the member churches of the World Council of Churches in the Middle East and the Council's Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service.

tinians. We consider it our duty to call upon the churches of the world to use all their influence towards a just solution involving necessarily the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians from which alone a lasting peace could come to the Middle East. Towards this end, we suggest to the Churches the following guide lines:

There is growing awareness of the reality of a Palestinian community, and manifestation of a Palestinian identity as shown, for example, in the Palestine liberation movement. Awareness of this Palestinian identity may be a first step towards the redress of the injustices done to the Palestinians. This means specifically that all of our work, both in humanitarian fields and in the preparation of educational and informational material, must be done not only *for* the Palestinians but *with* them.

While the statement of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Canterbury in August 1969 is not regarded as, in every respect, acceptable to all the members of the Consultation, we welcome it as a step forward in building understanding among the Churches of the need to work for justice to the Palestinian people.

In particular we believe, in line with the Canterbury Statement (Point 3), that in supporting the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, without recognizing the rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, injustice has been done to the Palestinian Arabs by the Great Powers, and this injustice should be redressed.

In line with the Canterbury Statement (Point 8), we are concerned about the guardianship of the Holy Places, the status of Jerusalem, and the people of the city, andd we welcome the proposal that the World Council of Churches should initiate discussions on the point.

Concerning the subject of biblical interpretation, we note with satisfaction that the Canterbury Statement (Point 7) has warned against "the misuse of the Bible in support of partisan political views."

We recognize the difficulties to be expected in any effort to vitalize the churches' work, both in the field of humanitarian services and in the struggle for the fundamental rights of the Palestinian refugees. And with the Canterbury Statement, we pray "that our Churches will have a renewed sense of the continuing and increasing tragedy of the Palestinian refugees and other displaced persons, and of the imperative obligation of the Churches to

minister to their needs and support their basic demand for justice." (Point 5)

All our work of compassion should be done in the context of the struggle for a just solution.

The Consultation requests the World Council of Churches to ask member churches to use all their influence on their governments towards the redress of the injustice done to Palestine refugees; such redress to be based upon the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration or Human Rights.

The Consultation welcomes the actions of the Churches' Commission on International Affairs (CCIA) in convening consultations on the Palestine problem. It recommends that further consultations be held in which Palestinians should be included and that the conclusions of such consultations be communicated to the United Nations Secretary General and to the member churches of the World Council of Churches.

The Consultation requests CCIA, working in consultation with the churches of the Middle East, and with due regard to the guidelines stated above to intensify regular discussions at the United Nations and with all governments concerned with influencing a political solution. It suggests that the exchanges which take place should not always remain unpublished.

The Consultation suggests that the various Divisions of the World Council of Churches should be requested to examine their programmes in order to ensure that the ramifications of the Palestine refugee question are not overlooked. For instance, the Division of Ecumenical Action could be asked to see how far it can involve itself in aspects of leadership training and appropriate youth work in the light of the specific needs of the Palestine refugees."

Information on the Palestine Refugee Problem

We found that one obstacle to the action of the Churches throughout the world was the lack of responsible information on the Palestine refugee problem. We make therefore two recommendations:

1. We consider it an imperative obligation of all Christian Churches to use their utmost efforts through their organizations, conferences and publications, and in cooperation with the sister Churches of the Middle East, to bring out, responsibly, the facts about the Palestinian refugees and

other displaced persons and the grave injustices done to the Palestinian people so as to help create the conditions conducive to a just solution.

2. We call upon the churches of the world, at all levels from the local congregations to national and regional councils, to promote an informed Christian discussion of the Palestine question. There must be deep understanding of the inalienable nature of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people. Our concern for justice must go forward concurrently with renewed humanitarian efforts.

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* E (English), A (Arabic), F (French).